

studio 404

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studio 404

by [quartzfia](#)

Summary

With zero hesitation he pushed the door upon, eyes darting to the figure there as he realized it was very much not empty. George found himself completely enthralled with what he saw.

He always had a thing for tappers, didn't he?

Or in which, George left everything behind him to pursue his dreams of dance in New York City, and meets two mysterious people he grows too attached to in too little time.

golden

Chapter Summary

George seems to be a magnet for mysterious men. Not that he totally minds, though.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Anyone can wish to go to New York, to see the lights, maybe a few shows, enjoy the scenery.

George *craved* it.

He had jumped at every opportunity to train back in England, working hours and hours past when his studio was supposed to close until every muscle in his body ached. He had grown accustomed to the insistent pain after every group class or private lesson, almost to the point of reveling in it.

Every dancer in the rooms of his pre-screens and callbacks could bend themselves in impossible ways and use every tendon and muscle to keep themselves on balance and upright for way longer than any normal person would, but to scouts and colleges, it mattered how effortless it looked. Back at home, it was a competition practically to see how bored your face could look while executing intricate combos and turns, keeping the effort, exertion, and pain deep inside and unseen.

George had always excelled at this, and his masking of true feelings or emotions went far beyond his ballet flats and barres. He'd always been good at remaining an enigma.

This was one of the many factors leading to his acceptance at his top school in the heart of New York City, and on top of it, the full scholarship there.

He'd nearly fainted when he'd received the email, and could not have been jumpier to finally leave the place he had called home for his whole life. His heart had always been somewhere else, drifting off into the sea of his passions and always leading him back to his big-city dreams.

Being on the campus, however, was the most surreal feeling he could get. The crisp autumn around him seemed to be coursing through his veins, the gusts of wind picking up the edges of his hoodie and pushing him through the doors of where he'd call home for the next few years.

Being accepted into the dance conservatory, specifically ballet, was one of the toughest feats available at the school.

Despite this, he would still be rooming with random people, unconnected to his major, which was how he met his first friend.

Throughout the five weeks leading up to the campus opening to move into, each student had access to their roommate's phone number and were set to text each other certain "ice breakers" per week to make things less awkward.

George thought it was the cringiest bullshit he'd heard in a while, and luckily his roommate Nick did too. They became fast friends, mocking each automatic system text they'd get with their weekly tasks and just trying to act normal around each other.

Nick, or as he preferred to go by Sapnap (George thought it was a stupid name, but kept his thoughts to himself), was a computer science major who had lived in the city most of his life, and wanted to become a game designer after college. He'd mentioned a childhood best friend and a few other insignificant details George couldn't remember.

Needless to say, he was satisfied with his random luck at a pretty decent dorm mate.

He found his way through the halls and up way more stairs than he wanted to trek on a daily basis to finally arrive at his door already open and boxes still strewn across the front.

"Hey," George said, stepping over the boxes of things and rolling in his luggage. He brought very little with him from England, most of the weight being clothes, but Sapnap seemed to have brought everything from his childhood home and then some.

"Hey, your room's on the left, you have any classes today?" The taller replied, moving to stand up from his place on the couch to actually greet his friend.

"No, I start tomorrow, which thank god because I'm already completely drained."

The brunette nodded in response, moving to pick up the second to last cardboard box and going to what he assumed was his room which was the door next to his.

George sighed, glancing around the tiny dorm. It was quaint, the kitchen and living area in a connected room that might have seemed cramped to anyone normal, but George had been dreaming of being in a confined room in the big city since he could jeté.

Rolling and carrying what little luggage he had, he walked into his shell of a room, glanced at the empty desk and neatly made bed lacking pillows.

Despite the small layer of dust collecting on his windowsill, the clearly unsturdy wood making up his furniture, and the carpet he just knew would get dirty and uncleanable instantly, after years of yearning and tears, he finally felt at home.

Of *all* the required classes for his major, of course dance education history would be one of them.

George had lucked out on the fact that most of his classes were in person, rigorous, and training based, meaning he had the option to take some of his more academic classes online, this being one of them. Any offer to spend his time outside of a stuffy lecture hall was one he would take.

His room had quickly become his, walls now lined with posters and assorted decorations, along with a rather large planning calendar because as if he would ever be able to properly organize himself with all the chaos of his career path and major. It felt like home before, and was then simply taking its shape.

George was sitting in the waiting room of his class, boredly scrolling through Twitter as a distraction. He knew he was early, but he'd wanted to make a somewhat good impression before completely losing his professor's trust with half-assed assignments. I mean, everyone in that class would be dancing upwards of five hours a day, what did they expect?

His screen quickly changed and mortification flooded through his system as he realized he was the

only person whose camera had started on when he joined the meeting. Cheeks ablaze and hands frantically moving to turn his camera off he was kicking himself mentally for not checking to see if he clicked 'join with camera' or not. The brunette ran a hand through the short waves at the top of his head, face and collarbones still flushed a slight pink at the embarrassment. In hindsight, all of the students there were on their phones or desperately chugging any form of caffeine they could prior to their night classes, but the idea that anyone had been paying attention made himself cringe.

That idea was only confirmed when he saw a chat notification pop up.

Clay Adams (Private Message): damn shame you turned your cam off

Well, perhaps it could've been worse. The embarrassment was still crawling under his skin as it sunk in that whoever Clay was had noticed and stared long enough to say something

Me: and why is that

Clay Adams (Private Message): youre cute, wouldve given me something to pay attention to in this bs class

His cheeks flared up a second time as he glanced into his mirror on the wall across from him. In his own opinion, he looked like shit. Dancing for hours at a time and only getting a quick rinse of a shower before going to more class did not produce a good-look on *anyone*, let alone George.

Still, the compliment made him flush, despite having zero clue who had given him it.

Me: youre bold for messaging someone you dont know

Clay Adams (Private Message): people tell me im quite bold

Clay Adams (Private Message): major?

A random person messaging him over a zoom chat was clearly either desperate, horny, or desperately horny, yet George couldn't bring himself to stop talking to the mystery boy. He could care less about what his professor was droning on about.

Me: maybe i want a part of myself to be a mystery too, mr faceless

Clay Adams (Private Message): fair enough

Clay Adams (Private Message): still wanna talk with you, makes class less boring

Me: am i just a distraction to you?

Clay Adams (Private Message): no youre more than that

Damn, this guy was smooth. George had come across his fair share of sweet-talkers throughout the dance scene but how this one managed to make a conversation over zoom feel so comfortable was beyond him. His lips curled into a soft smile, easing into the pillows behind him and letting himself interact with someone.

George wasn't opposed to being social, but with hectic studio and performance schedules, he never really had time for much of any real friend after discounting his tights and dance bag. It was nice to have an easy conversation that wasn't asking about the combo they were doing across the floor or which foot they were starting on for a section of petit allegro.

Me: well then, tell me about yourself since you know something about me

Clay Adams (Private Message): what do i know about you

Me: my face, duh

Clay Adams (Private Message): hardly counts but okay.

Clay Adams (Private Message): lived in the city for what seems like forever and i snuck my cat into my dorm

Me: how the hell did you manage that??

Clay Adams (Private Message): as you said before im very bold. shes a pretty kitty and i wasn't just gonna leave her behind

George's heat fluttered at that, with little reason why. Attempting to remind himself he'd no clue what this person looked like, he took a minute to check his phone again.

His plan failed as he immediately found himself itching to respond to the stranger, eventually caving much faster than he wanted.

Me: thats very sweet of you to risk your tuition for your cat

Clay Adams (Private Message): eh at most id get like a warning or smth im sure i could talk my way out of it

George rolled his eyes. Who did this person think they were?

Although, at a prestigious school of the arts, cockiness often got you the furthest. A part of him found himself drawn to the large ego.

Me: youre very cocky for someone who hasnt shown their face

Clay Adams (Private Message): one day sweetheart

The brunette bit the inside of his cheek, running a hand through his hair and tugging on his roots. It had been ages since he'd been called any pet name from anyone other than an old ballet teacher while fixing his form.

Who does he think he is?

Despite the inner frustration at the intrepid mystery boy, he couldn't stop his mind from wandering back to him throughout the lecture.

Harmless conversations in an easy class could never hurt, anyways.

The aching in his legs had long settled in from his morning intensives, however, that didn't mean George's day was done. Far from it, in fact.

One of his main draws to the school was the extra studios in the back quadrant of the dance conservatory building. Almost all of them were full at any given time, but as the sun bled away past the city skyline, some of the rooms cleared up and the atmosphere was much calmer. Most were simple, basic floor for all types of dance with two barres on either side of the rectangular room. Some studios had large floor to ceiling windows, while the smaller ones were stuck with none at all.

He found himself falling more in love with the campus as he walked through the dimly lit halls lined with rooms upon rooms. The linoleum under his feet was everything he'd imagined it'd be, and he truly couldn't bring himself to care about the pain and aches throughout his body as he approached the door he'd been looking for.

George had practically memorized the campus before moving, studying maps as a teenager with dreams he was now living as a reality. He knew exactly which studio he was looking for, but it still somehow didn't feel real as he stood in front of the silver-plated number on the door. He had to stop himself from reaching out and brushing the numbers in front of him to convince himself that *this* was real.

Studio 404

The adrenaline bubbling in his chest seemed to cause his ears to fill with static noise as he failed to notice the obvious noise on the other side of the door. With zero hesitation he pushed the door upon, eyes darting to the figure there as he realized it was very much not empty.

George found himself completely enthralled with what he saw.

A tall blonde, freckles lining the bridge of his nose and across his cheeks, beyond hyper-focused tapping away with precision and certainty George had never truly seen before. His eyebrows were furrowed inwards yet his features possessed a lightness as if everything was coming naturally to him. The brunette couldn't help but stand in complete shock as the blonde finished his routine

before him, music slowing and ending with a steady triplet beat repetition.

Stomp heel toe, stomp heel toe, toestand, toestand, stomp

The music cut just as did his taps, and George felt blood rush to his face as the blonde turned his direction, stumbling backwards a bit. The look on his face was unreadable for a moment before relaxing into a sheepish smile.

“Oh my god, I am *so* sorry, I was planning on using this room but then you were here and holy shit you’re skilled and-”

“Hey,” The blonde interrupted, walking over to George with a soft laugh. “You’re good, don’t even worry about it. I know this is like, the best room on this floor.”

He wasn’t wrong. George picked this very studio after falling in love with the windows showcasing the city below them, an ode to where his heart had lived for so long. Prime property for any dancer.

It was then when George realized he had to look up to make eye contact with the tapper.

Holy shit he’s tall .

“I can- uhm, I can leave if you-”

“*No!* ” The dancer responded, moving a tanned arm towards George almost a little too enthusiastically. “Erm, I mean, no. If my sounds aren’t bothering you, we can share the room if you’d like.”

A golden smile spread across the tall boy’s face as he spoke and the brunette felt his knees go weak at the sight. Shaking his head out of his trance, he willed a response.

“Yeah, yeah that sounds great, actually. I was just gonna work on barre stuff.”

George set his bag down next to the barre, sitting on the floor and moving to take off his vans and change to his flats. Shockingly, he found the tapper sitting down by him.

“Gentleman, I see,” George willed out playfully, hiding his own red cheeks downwards at his shoes to focus on changing.

“I needed a break anyways. I’d kill myself going a fourth time in a row.”

The laugh the golden boy procured was like a symphony to George. Beautiful melodies of silver and rust colliding together as if crafted by a *God* .

Perhaps he was too in over his head with a boy he’d met a few minutes ago but everything about him reeked of sunshine and beauty.

He’d really always had a thing for tappers, in all honesty.

Perhaps it was because he himself could not tap for the life of him, being so awfully uncoordinated with the deathtraps others called shoes all his life. Almost every other dance form he could excel at or at least manage to stay afloat in (hip hop was pushing it), but for some reason he could never figure out tap, despite the hours of private lessons and frustration in his room past midnight that he couldn’t get himself to get even close to a single travelling timestep.

He finished tying his strings and stood up, shedding his jacket as well.

“Well, since we are sharing, I should ask your name,”

George almost fell silent as he glanced up into the most piercing and stunning eyes he’d seen in a lifetime.

“George. And what can I call you?”

The blonde’s face faltered, glancing down at the brunette’s hand reaching out towards him.

“Erm, Dream.”

George giggled at that, moving to shake his hand.

“Dream? Won’t even tell me your real name?”

“It would ruin the whole alluring mystery tapper vibe, wouldn’t it?”

Dream’s face ran red at his words, despite the smirk still residing in his features.

“Well then, Dream it is.”

Chapter End Notes

well BOY is this gonna be a ride! ive been planning this au for quite some time now and holy shit im so ecstatic for it to be brought to fruition now!

these chapters are going to be longer than my other works, but the entire work is already outlined out, so updates will most likely be very frequent alongside "more than i thought i did".

any & all comments are welcome and appreciated! thank you for your support on my works, it truly means beyond the world :]

-fia <33

[twitter](#)

windows

Chapter Summary

George is quite intrigued with the mystery tapper he's been dancing with, and while his body was aching, the blonde's words seemed to soothe him more than ice and piano music ever could.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

His feet dragged against the floor, sore and lifeless with almost every movement.

George knew he should've been back in his dorm with a real (as real as you can get in college) meal, a cup of water, and a piano playlist before falling asleep and dreaming of nothing but dead air and peace. However, the brunette was *not* a quitter, and he only took one day a week off of extra practice time, and tonight was not that night.

There was a steady throb in the back of his mind, ripping through his body leading to small shakes.

It wasn't a hard warm-up by any means, just technique and ankle strength training, but with the little effort he was able to put into it, it was more of a hindrance than a help.

"You look like hell, why are you even here?" A strong voice snapped him out of his dazed state.

"What? No, I'm fine," George responded, refusing to make eye contact with the tall blonde now standing over him, a hand leaning on the barre behind him.

"You're literally not even fully doing combos and when you do your legs are shaking. Sit down," Dream continued, crossing his arms as he aimlessly made a few sounds with his shoes. George shook his head, continuing to look at the floor and tendu his leg back to first position, willing the fatigue behind his eyes and in his body.

"No, no, I'm fine, really just let me do this combination again I-"

"*George .*"

The air in the blonde's voice was gone and it had become a command rather than a suggestion. The brunette couldn't hold back the flush on his face when he finally returned eye contact with the tall tapper. His yellow eyes were screaming at him to listen and in all honesty, George was more than willing to obey when *he* was telling him to do something.

"Sit down, please."

Rolling his eyes (he didn't want to seem *too* willing), he let his body gently collapse to the floor sticking his legs out like a child. Dream laughed, ruffling his blonde waves and sitting down next to him with a knee bent to his chest, hands clasped together overtop.

"What's up? Why do you look two steps away from death?"

George sighed, recognizing the pounding in his head and just how *tired* he was.

It had been a few days of his routine, adjusting to the grueling hours, yet always forcing time for his extra work in studio 404. Dream was there too, always working on something looking incredibly focused when George walked in.

Maybe the blonde's presence played a role in why he insisted on leaving his dorm every night sacrificing homework and relaxation to get extra stretching and technique in, while catching glances at the person he shared the studio with.

Despite that, they hadn't talked all that much, a few small conversations and quick (dare he say flirty?) lines, but sitting next to the tall boy, he felt a sense of peace and comfort.

"I've always worked really hard, so this state is kind of normal for me. Eventually it fades and I'm back on top of my game. You have to be in this industry," George said, eyelids heavy but with no sign of sleep anywhere.

"Working hard is good but not to the point where you look like shit and your legs won't stop shaking," Dream replied, furrowing his eyebrows and looking down at the brunette next to him. For the first time that day, George smirked, looking up through his lashes at the blonde.

"Wow I look like shit, huh?"

Dream flushed at the realization of how what he said sounded, and moved his hands to shake as he frantically recollected himself.

"No, no! God no, you just look overwhelmed and tired and sad."

George let out a small laugh before Dream smirked and continued.

"C'mon now, you always look stunning to me we both know that."

Despite the light pink dust to his cheeks, the brunette rolled his eyes crossing his arms and looking up playfully at his friend? Acquaintance? He wasn't too sure.

"I think you deserve a break."

Dream's tone shifted to a much softer and lighter one, making George's heart melt at the sudden care.

"I really don't want to go back to my dorm right now, my roommate said he had a date tonight and I don't want to go back and cockblock or some shit, I'd never hear the end of it," George responded, fingers toying with themselves in his grip.

Sapnap had been fussing for the past two days, talking his ear off about how George needed to be out of the house for his allusive date. In all honesty, George was so annoyed with how much his roommate was going on about the mystery person, he'd been taking any extra opportunity he could to leave for that exact reason.

Even without the prospect of hearing his friend get laid in the room over from his, he much preferred the floor to ceiling windows of studio 404 than his own compact room.

And perhaps the attractive blonde that came with the room was an added bonus, too.

"I never said go back to your dorm," Dream continued, eyes drifting from the darkness of the sky

through the window down back to the brunette next to him. George opened his mouth to say something but was cut off.

“Just stay here with me. We can just talk.”

George’s heart thumped as he turned his head to make eye contact. The blonde really was stunning, but despite flirty side comments, he was also probably very straight and/or had a significant other. Still, he’d give anything to know more about the enigma he outwardly claimed to be.

“Okay well, tell me about yourself. You grow up here?” George asked, folding his hands in his lap.

Dream nodded and let out a small laugh.

“Yeah, lived here with my mom for as long as I can remember. I’ve never even considered moving away, the city life makes me feel so alive and free. Plus, I mean, what better place to chase my dreams right?”

George was captivated as the blonde spoke, voice somehow easing the pain away from his muscles and bones.

“I don’t know what that feels like, I always wanted to leave England, even when I was super young. I just knew it wasn’t where I was meant to be, you know? I’ve danced since I could walk practically and I’ve spent years and years working my ass off to get here. In all honesty, its completely surreal,” George responded, hands moving aimlessly as he rambled. Dream seemed just as intrigued with the brunette as he with him.

“I knew I loved tap for, like, forever, and I really regret when I took a break.”

The blonde looked sheepish, eyes fixating on the other end of the room, the hand on his knee subconsciously tapping a random rhythm.

Holy shit his hands are big.

“You took a break?” George asked, moving to turn his legs facing Dream, wincing slightly at the pain. Dream smirked, rolling his eyes and wetting his lips before speaking again.

“Yeah, I was a shitty kid in middle school and, like, the beginning of high school. I guess shitty isn’t the right word, I was just in a lot of pain and had no clue how to understand it.”

Dream looked like he was processing for a moment, seeming about to halt the conversation before looking turning to face George, a little startled he wasn’t uncomfortable.

George wanted to know everything about him, his favorite color, his childhood, how he grew to love dance, his best friends, everything. He would sit there for hours on end if it meant he’d get to listen to the soft and deep overtones of the tapper’s voice.

“I’m listening,” He got out, smiling softly, reveling in the slight flush of the blonde’s face as he turned his head forward continuing his story.

“Right. Well, I-I was going through a lot. My parents had been divorced for a long time, but my fucking dad was trying to get in contact, and I was pissed that he was even *trying* to talk to me after the bullshit he put my mom through. And then I was also coming to terms with, uhm, my- my sexuality which, let me tell you, hormonal teenager, daddy issues, and sexuality crisis do *not* go well together.”

George laughed at that, heart rate spiking at the notion that Dream could even be *interested* in guys. He too knew what it was like to be a confused teen in a world of hate and bullshit.

Dream's face sunk before continuing.

"And one day I was at school with my awful friends at the time and I never mentioned tap around them before, but I let it slip I had a class or something, I can't even remember, and they started ripping me apart. Looking back, it was so dumb to be so upset for, but when your 'friends' are calling you gay for something you love and you're already confused about what you are, it-"

"-I know what that's like Dream," George cut off, keeping a soft smile as the blonde looked back at him the flush reappearing overtop his freckles.

"You do?" Dream asked.

"Yeah, dumbass. I had my whole sexuality crisis after I saw a senior at my studio freshman year come out of a jazz class with all his friends and it sort of clicked why I never was into girls at all."

George laughed, pulling his knees to his chest and leaning his cheek against the tops of them. Dream's smile got wider at that, and continued speaking.

"I had this friend I was a little too friendly with and I never understood why I got so pissed when he'd talk about girls and shit. It also didn't help that I knew I liked girls already and I didn't even fully understand what being bi was or that it was normal. But so that night I threw my tap shoes out of my window of our apartment building like the angsty teen I was. I just- I hated myself and I thought it would go away if I destroyed the part of me I had attached it to."

George couldn't tell whether he wanted to laugh at the thought of a teenage Dream throwing his shoes out a window or to cry at the hopelessness and anguish he could relate to in the younger version of his friend.

"How did you come back?" He asked, studying Dream's adam's apple as he talked, watching it bob and mentally tracing the freckles dotting his neck. The blonde sighed, smiling to himself and giving a small nod to George, cocking his head to the right down at him.

"I told my mom to cancel all of my shit, and I basically lived in my room rotting away. It was four months later that someone came to our door with my shoes and said that they knew I was the only person in the building who tapped and maybe lost them on my way to class. When my mom handed me them back I had a breakdown and basically came out on the floor of our living room. It was the moment I swore to myself I'd never let anyone take my confidence from me again, even if they were affecting me I'd never give them the satisfaction of showing them."

George nodded, stunned with the explanation given. Throughout their short time in the expansive dance room, the brunette quickly realized the cocky attitude and outlook of the blonde, always consistently confident and strong in everything he did. This disappeared when he spoke to George, however, but still remained in small barely noticeable quirks.

"Well its a good thing you continued on, otherwise you wouldn't be gracing the world with your abilities," George joked, moving to sit back on his arms.

"Wouldn't've met you either, and that's very important, isn't it?"

George's face burned, forcing an eye roll and shoving the boy next to him gently on the knee,

"You're so stupid."

Another golden wheeze came from Dream, and George was beginning to grow too used to the fluttering in his stomach.

“Mhmm sure, mister ballet. How’d that start?”

George snorted at the memory.

“My first class I ever took was a tap class, actually, I was like five. Even then I hated it, everyone else was able to do shuffles and I was crying in the corner for my mum to pick me up.”

Dream sputtered another wheeze, shoulders shaking. George found himself laughing along with him, feeling safer than he had in a long time.

“She put me in ballet and jazz after that, which I quickly grew to love. Through secondary school and on I just was more pulled to ballet and fell in love with it. I don’t remember the moment I realized I wanted to specialize in it, it just sort of happened. But I can’t tap to save my life, I think that’s why I love watching it so much.”

“I could never do ballet, obviously I had to for technique but past what I was required at my studio? No way in *hell* .”

There was a pause as George looked up again, eye contact lingering. The pair knew little about each other, but the brunette couldn’t shake the draw and pull to the other. A part of his chest was itching to run and jump into the sea that was Dream’s being, despite barely knowing him. He couldn’t place his mind in the ocean of feelings.

“I could try and teach you sometime, you know,” The blonde said, voice dropping low enough to give the brunette a subconscious shiver. Not wanting to break the moment, George huffed out a small laugh. The thought that they were close enough to be sharing air made him reel.

“My ex-boyfriend was a tapper, he tried and always got frustrated with my timesteps.”

Dream’s eyebrows furrowed at that, jaw clenching. George didn’t miss the bite behind his eyes. Something about it made the brunette whirl.

“He sounds like an asshole.”

“He was. First longterm boyfriend and the bitch cheats on me too many times to count.”

The brunette went to laugh it off, the pain of the experience no longer fresh and more of an old scar to look at and remember, before Dream’s eyes sharpened again.

“What the fuck, George? I-I’m *so* sorry that-”

“-Dream I *promise* it’s fine. Those memories are far, far in the past, and I haven’t dated anyone else really since.”

Dream opened his mouth to say something, before stopping himself and taking a breather. The protectiveness behind his eyes and throughout his body made George want to melt into it and hide behind.

Despite his traumatic past with boys and relationships, he had managed to not let his heart break again (too much) by just avoiding it all together. He’d let himself mentally appreciate people’s looks, or daydream scenarios of dates, or sometimes let his mind slip to a place it really shouldn’t in the middle of class, but he’d never let it affect his reality.

Dream was making that line he set up a lot harder to follow.

"I'm sorry, for both freaking out there and also your experiences. I haven't had the best either, but I'm doing miles better now."

George felt the impending heart ache coming, awaiting the drop of a name for a partner.

"My-"

Girlfriend, boyfriend-

"-best friend helped me through a lot of it, and I haven't really dated since coming here, either."

How the hell is someone like him single?

It was a question the brunette would take to his thoughts late at night.

"I just realized I never asked how old you are," Dream continued, gaze drifting from the city lights outside the window to George.

"I'm 20, my parents gave me an extra year of preschool and I studied at a local dance school for a year before I was accepted here."

The blonde laughed, a hand ruffling through his own waves (had his arms always been that toned?).

"Shit, you're older than me. I'm 19, just old for my class."

George studied the soft features of the boy's cheeks, as he began to ramble on about a story from high school. The beat and intonation of Dream's voice lulled a part of him into full relaxation mode, giving in to his body's want of fully collapsing over itself. His eyelids fluttered closed, trying to hang onto the details of the boy's every word while also allowing himself to be at peace.

When the steady sound of Dream's voice stopped, George tilted his head up and moved to sit up only to wince at the fatigue cramping his body.

"We should get you back to your dorm, yeah?" Dream said, giving a soft laugh and letting his voice drop a few semitones. His arms reached to grab the brunette from overexerting himself more than he already was.

George sleepily nodded, making an attempt to sit up before wanting to cry at the energy it would take to fully stand. His eyes weren't open enough to see Dream's expression, but he could feel the worry in the air. Before he could fully take in the hazy world around him, his legs and body were hoisted up into the air.

Arms flying to the taller's neck, George let out a shocked call of the blonde's name, procuring a wheeze.

"Dream! How do you expect me to get back to my dorm?" George mumbled, groggily taking in his surroundings and registering the younger swinging their respective bags over the unoccupied shoulder, making his way out and switching the light of the studio off.

"George, you're overworking yourself, I could see your thighs shaking when you tried to stand. Tell me what building and number you're in, I'm taking you there."

The prospect of his thighs shaking in front of Dream led his cheeks to become much too inflamed

to be seen as normal. He shoved away the thoughts he should *not* have been imagining about the friend that was carrying him bridal style down the empty halls of the dance wing, and succumbed to the warmth of Dream's chest.

If he thought hard enough he could hear the boy's heartbeat.

"Building C, dorm 223," George mumbled, eyes barely staying open.

His last memories before dozing off were the strong arms holding his back and legs, the scent of musk and pine filling his nose, and the warmth surrounding his being.

He woke up in his bed completely tucked in with the shine shining lightly through his blinds. Rolling over, he vaguely registered the events of the night prior. The thought that Dream's scent may still be on the jacket he wore made his head spin.

Seconds after sitting up and reaching for his phone, his door burst open with a frantic Sapnap.

"*Dude!*" He yelled, making George drop his phone and slip to the floor.

"What the *fuck* Sapnap?" He replied, picking his phone up as his roommate sat on the edge of his bed.

"I tell you to get out of the dorm and you come home past out at one am being carried by Dream?"

George rolled his eyes and went to respond before furrowing his eyebrows in confusion.

"You know Dream?"

Sapnap's face faltered for a second, like he was repeating something from a script.

"Yeah, we've been best friends since we were kids. Small world, huh?"

George laughed at that, making himself feel a bit more uneasy to discuss his interest in the blond with his childhood best friend.

"Crazy. How'd your date go?"

Sapnap flushed, ruffling a hand through his hair and not making an attempt to hide the red spreading across his cheeks.

"I-I mean it was good, we just watched a movie and ordered takeout, but holy shit is-"

Sapnap paused. "-are they, uhm, cool. And pretty, I think I've told you that before."

George sensed the hesitancy around the pronoun usage. He sensed the feeling Sapnap wasn't particularly out about everything to him, and decided to not pry.

"Well I'm glad you had fun. *God*, I'm sore, bring me Advil?"

Sapnap whined, before inevitably standing up and bringing back George's water bottle and two Advil.

“Anything else for you, princess?”

George laughed, flipping him off before rolling to take his phone off of the charger. He noticed a small piece of paper on the drawer next to his table, moving to pick it up he quickly read it.

Didn't wanna wake you up. Sleep well Georgie.

-D

PS you're roommates with my best friend and didn't tell me? Quite rude.

George smiled.

God, was he in for it.

Chapter End Notes

any & all comments are appreciated!

updates soon, i hope you're enjoying reading as much as i am writing :]

-fia <3

[twitter](#)

neon lights

Chapter Summary

George has known Dream for some weeks now and his roommate convinces him to go to a Halloween party with the promise of the blonde being there.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Fall had begun to fully sink in, George continuing to be beyond busy with routines, and booking small roles for film productions in the wing over that needed dance parts. His constant had been his wide glass windows and music that was most definitely meant for tapping (yet somehow made it work with his barre routine).

Classes were beyond boring, but he had grown to love dance education history way more than he could've dreamed of before school started. Not for the curriculum, mind you, it was Clay who truly had made himself anticipate Tuesdays and Thursdays at four o'clock.

After finding out about his roommate being best friends with the attractive tapper that had been flirting with him for weeks that they had known each other then, he refrained from telling him about his choice words and opinions of the blonde opting to keep them to himself.

George had been spending more time with his roommate, though, setting up a routine of making time between their hectic schedules to eat lunch together and sit down and watch a movie once a week (those petty arguments of choosing a film were laced with affection, they promised).

He'd settled into his classes, getting used to the workload and stress on his body, being sore less and less often at the end of his days. His comfort level easing up around Dream since their first night of long conversations, finally able to come up with flirty quips back.

Clay had still managed to make him flush, mainly because of the fact he knew what the brunette looked like while he was in the dark.

Their relationship was peculiar, and especially odd with their only conversations being over class private messages for sixty five minutes. George really did want to get to know the person, as they found out they had quite a lot in common. They both liked computers and video games, Clay took an interest in space and the universe (which George loved to read) and also loved cats and could go on for ages about how their connection to humans was superior to that of dogs. Needless to say, George was beyond intrigued by the mystery boy.

Both of the guys flirting with him were complete mysteries in a lot of ways, which led George to believe he was a magnet for allusive men.

He'd be lying if he said he didn't find it appealing.

He was in dance history and, as usual, bullshitting around in his private messages with his friend.

Clay Adams (Private Message): Have you been actually taking care of yourself recently or are you dying again

Me: listen eating takes so much work i just live off of whatever is in my dance bag at the time

Clay Adams (Private Message): I'm gonna meet your roommates just to tell them to take care of you because you obviously need it

Me: how about you just come take care of me yourself

They'd grown used to flirty and suggestive remarks being tossed between the pair, some more intense and causing a deep red to fall more often than others.

Clay Adams (Private Message): Oh come on now

Clay Adams (Private Message): I would definitely do so if I could but we both know I can't

Me: you never tell me whyyyyy :(

Clay Adams (Private Message): Stop whining you're gonna make me feel bad

Me: ignoring you now :[

George closed chat and smirked to himself, always knowing how to get Clay to say something to keep him entertained throughout his class. He really did have the boy wrapped around his finger, although that sentiment definitely fell both ways as George found himself unable to stay away from his chat for very long.

He had wanted to talk to Clay more than just in the hour-ish chunks they did for class, but he felt it would be weird to just ask for social media or god forbid his *phone number* over a *zoom private message*.

Despite this, a part of him could dream.

He could read the small yellow messages at the bottom of his screen, dragging his eyes away from the words to try and ignore them for just a little bit. He'd never admit it, but he loved the game of cat and mouse they played (and all the ones he had in the past too).

The message that caught his eye had the end cut off, but the beginning made him rush to open chat embarrassingly fast.

Clay Adams (Private Message): Georgie

Clay Adams (Private Message): George

Clay Adams (Private Message): Oh my god come back, you're so annoying

Clay Adams (Private Message): I'll give you my number

Me: how do you even know if i want your number

Me: maybe i dont want to talk to you

Clay Adams (Private Message): You came back the second I said "I'll give"

Clay Adams (Private Message): Can't resist me for that long, can you?

George rolled his eyes and let out a laugh to himself at that.

Me: perhaps

There was a still in messages before George broke it, increasingly impatient.

Me: so about your number

Clay Adams (Private Message): Told you so

Clay Adams (Private Message): What's the magic word?

Me: youre the worst

George felt his body tense up slightly as he typed out the next message. He'd hated begging and refused to do so in almost any case, but his draw to the strong presence through computer screens was disregarding any type of common barriers he had put up.

Me: please please can i have your number clay?

A minute passed before he got a response.

Clay Adams (Private Message): Now was that so hard?

Clay Adams (Private Message): ###-###-####

George scrambled for his phone, patting his bed next to him in an attempt to figure out where it was under the heaps of blankets and sheets on his bed. Finally finding it, he hastily opened his contacts, adding the stranger's number and a name along with it before sending a brief message.

To: Clay ;(

hello this is your amazon driver with the 700 dildos you ordered

From: Clay ;(

Damn I think you have the wrong number, I can give you my friend George's

George shook his head smirking with a laugh at the response. Clay always found a way to make the brunette laugh, and he couldn't really fully understand how.

To: Clay ;(

youre so annoying

From: Clay ;(

Oh so this isn't the amazon driver?

From: Clay ;(

Sucks I thought I'd be sending you a present

To: Clay ;(

what the fuck would anyone do with 700 dildos that would probably fill up my entire dorm space

Clay began typing before the bubble disappeared at the same time his professor had signalled the end of class. George briefly glanced at the homework he'd left in canvas before logging out of the lesson and collapsing on his back against his pillows to see a response from Clay.

From: Clay ;(

Of all the words you really chose 'fill'?

To: Clay ;(

omg fuck you i was making a point not a euphamism, what are you, twelve?

From: Clay ;(

I'm a college boy what do you expect?

George rolled onto his side, the fatigue enveloping his eyes as he tried to type out a text he was falling asleep.

To: Clay ;(

im about to pass out and if i want to use a studio tonight i need to nap now

From: Clay ;(

Sleep then, you can talk to me whenever now

From: Clay ;(

Goodnight sweetheart

The brunette shoved his face into his pillows at the goddamn pet name. The guy was a flirt, a damn good one at that, but most of his lines didn't have a huge affect on him (*no* he did *not* blush thank you very much), but that stupid nickname he had used since day one always managed to make George want to absolutely strangle him. Out of affection, of course.

To: Clay ;(

youre such a loser

To: Clay ;(

goodnight :]

As his phone slipped onto the sheets next to him, he let his mind wander to past conversations, specifically the one where Clay had mentioned he was bisexual.

In the very beginning, George was quite worried that Clay was some random asshole dance kid who thought that fake flirting with guys was the most hilarious idea on the planet, so he kept himself pretty guarded throughout the beginning, until their messages became more personal. It was mostly random small things, like his favorite planet, but one of the things he mentioned was his bisexuality.

Perhaps one day he'd be able to meet and see what his so called admirer looked like.

Those thoughts swirling were the last thing before sleep took over him.

The fall air bit his nose as he stood next to his taller friend, mocha in hand outside a small cafe on campus.

"C'mon dude, *one* party? I'm not gonna let you try and sneak into a *dance studio* on fucking Halloween," Sapnap whined again.

He had been begging him to go to some stupid costume party with his computer science friends for the past two weeks after George revealed his lackluster plans for the holiday.

George took a sip of his drink and shook his head again.

"Sapnap, I'm *not* going to go to some dumbass Halloween party with you and a bunch of assholes I don't know. I'm just gonna find a way into the studio and meet Dream or-"

"Dream's coming!"

George's sentence fell flat at that, deflating at the fact that he couldn't use his friend as an excuse. Sapnap smirked at that, making (in George's opinion) stupid claps with his hands and flinging an arm around the shorter's shoulder pulling him in.

"Yes! Baby's first college party."

"Piss off, Sapnap I never even said yes-"

George shoved the arm back off of his shoulders, attempting to scowl as best he could through the red flush dotting his cheeks. He'd say it was because of the wind and cold bite.

"-You're gonna follow Dream wherever he goes, you can't lie to me."

"Mhm, sure Sapnap."

They started walking back to their dorm, drinks in hand, making small offhanded comments about campus or the people they were passing. The taller paused as they got closer to the entrance of the complex, looking slightly more sheepish and genuine.

“Are you actually cool with coming? As much as I want you to go I really don’t wanna, like, force you or-”

“-Yes, Sapnap, I’ll come. But literally just this once,” George interrupted, laughing at the sentiment. His friend smiled back and nodded, gesturing towards entering the building together.

Was he really going to do this? He sat on his bed, hands holding the stupid ears in his hands glancing up into the mirror across his room to stare at himself.

After deciding he was actually going to go, Sapnap insisted he dress up as “literally everyone else was going to”. The last thing he wanted to do was spend precious money on anything special or outlandish so in haste he rummaged through anything he had brought from old routines he could use.

The only real thing he had brought with him from England that could be made into a costume was an old white collar bowtie neck piece he used in a group routine years back about circus and carnival characters. His last memories wearing it were the complex leg extensions he had done, remembering the burns on his elbows and hands from catching himself and sliding on the stage floor.

It was pretty simple, white collar and black bowtie, black leotard, and black flare pants. He could go like that and call it a day, but while he was at the store picking up groceries for the dorm a pair of white bunny ears caught his eye, nestled between other animal headbands near the front of the store. He discreetly added them to his basket along with the actual food items and moved to the self checkout line.

What was ironic was that Dream had seen the brunette in much skimpier clothing, as dance lent itself to tights, leggings, and leotards, so the outfit was quite conservative for what he normally wore, but there was something about the fact that he was purposefully dressing up as a playboy bunny that caught his throat in a knot.

Knocks hit his door, snapping him out of his trance as he rushed to stand up and shove the ears on.

“George! Get your ass out here we’re gonna-”

The brunette hesitantly opened the door and Sapnap briefly stopped talking before bursting into a huge smile.

“You look great! C’mon, Karl is already waiting out there to drive us.”

The shorter was expecting some sort of mocking remark or jeer from his roommate but in all honesty was more than relieved at the kindness. He gave a soft smile before grabbing his phone and heading towards the door.

He felt a vibration on the front of his leg as they were walking down the stairs through the halls, sounds of loud parties and ruckus was heard through the thin walls of the rooms.

From: Clay ;(

Are you still going to that party you mentioned earlier?

To: Clay ;(

yeah why?

From: Clay ;(

No reason. Just stay safe

To: Clay ;(

what are you my mom?

From: Clay ;(

Can you fault a guy for not wanting you to get blackout drunk and do something stupid?

To: Clay ;(

i guess not

To: Clay ;(

im only gonna talk to, like, one person there anyways. dont worry your pretty little head about me

From: Clay ;(

Alright sweetheart, have fun then.

From: Clay ;(

Text me in the morning

George smiled softly at the kindness. He really had been nothing but sweet throughout their time of knowing each other. Every day he grew less uneasy about their friendship and truly did hope to get to meet him one day.

Sapnap nudged him out of his trance, gesturing at the door in front of them and the smiley brunette

waving a hand at them from his car he presumed to be Karl.

George didn't even notice they were down the stairs, or that Sapnap was dressed as a pirate.

He'd been losing himself to his mind and phone recently. A part of him couldn't bring himself to care.

It was so goddamn loud George couldn't hear himself think.

The "small party" Sapnap had described was *nothing* like the giant mess of chaos that was happening before him. Bunny ears and all, the brunette stood with his head against the far wall near the drink haphazardly laid out on a cheap table.

If he really tried to, he could probably grow to enjoy himself, as cast parties after shows were less tame than they were ever made out to be seen in media and he loved those, but he couldn't shake the awkwardness as music he'd never heard before thumped against his ears and a cup of spiked punch sat in his hand.

To top it off, he hadn't seen Dream at all.

He couldn't lie and say he wasn't disappointed he couldn't spot blonde tufts of hair peeking over hoards of people squished together in the small dorm (his stupidly tall self could almost always be seen). Moreover, if he actually had someone to *talk* to that he knew, he'd be more willing to let go and live a little.

Nonetheless, he stood idly sipping the tangy drink, red solo cup meeting his lips awaiting for some sign of Sapnap to say they could leave (if he wasn't wasted and kissing a stranger in the other corner of the room) or for someone he knew.

The brunette tugged at his bottom lip, weighing the options of leaving his little bubble in the corner to get more punch or staying just a bit longer in hiding. After a few moments of deliberation, he took bold strides past couples and friends yelling over some techno-pop singer to refill his cup. He had nothing better to do, anyways.

As his hand reached for the spigot to flip upwards, he felt a large warm body knock itself into him, taking the breath away from him for a second before trying to scold the asshole for not being more careful.

"Dude, watch where you're-"

George turned to properly show his dissatisfaction before his words fell flat at the embodiment of sunshine in front of him.

The blonde waves were extra frizzy under a newsboy cap, black eye makeup smudged against his cheek to act as residue, and a stupidly attractive grey striped vest and blue checkered shirt with the sleeves rolled up to his elbows.

Of *course* the fucker was dressed as a Newsie, and a damn attractive one at that.

His mind couldn't really wrap his head around the fact that his friend could pull off dressing like a

newsboy from the twentys so well, sweat from the stuffy atmosphere around them glistening against his forehead and the widest (*dumbest* in George's opinion) smile across his features.

"George! Sap told me you'd be here, I've been looking for you all night," Dream said, moving a hand to the shorter's shoulders only to finally fully take in the brunette's own costume.

"You-" The blonde started, face flushing and unabashedly staring at George. "You look great."

George rolled his eyes at the hesitancy as he moved to actually refill his cup and continue the conversation.

"So, newsie, huh?"

The melody of the blonde's laughs rang through the brunette's ears filling his mind with unadulterated euphoria. How did whatever godlike being out there manage to take the concept of literal sunlight and warmth and fuse it into a human? George would never fully understand it.

"Yeah, I mean, as a tapping guy it's like a right of passage."

He paused, as George turned back to him, almost as if he were afraid to say the wrong thing, before the image faded and a smirk replaced

"Playboy bunny? Where'd that come from?"

Leading Dream back to his bubble of security where he could manage to tune out everything else other than his golden boy, he faked a scoff, hand dramatically pulling to his chest.

"Dream! How rude of you to assume that. For all you know I could just be a rabbit who happens to wear a bowtie," He smirked against his cup as the blonde leaned his shoulder to the wall, adjacent from the brunette, almost caging him in.

Against the neon lights flickering across the room, the blonde's eyes took a more striking yellow than he could remember them before. Internally George was flushing, heat running through his body like electricity at the fact that Dream was essentially caging him off from the rest of the world. At that moment he didn't need anything other than the taller's scent of musk and pine to swallow him whole. Dream was a striking gold, refined and sharp, heavy to the touch, but protective and vulnerable when needed. A beautiful, beautiful amalgamation of molecules and metal come together to form a shining sun.

"Oh come on now, you can tell me you wanted to get my attention, Georgie," He continued, a low laugh rumbling low in his throat. The brunette let his eyes slip half-lidded, vaguely registering the annoying pop beat fading out behind him.

"You're quite cocky for a newsboy. How do you know I'm not seeing anyone else right now? Maybe this was for them."

Dream's face hardened, leaning closer to the shorter's face and crossing his arms.

"I don't think you'd be eyefucking me if you were, would you?"

The shiver that overtook his body was involuntary, but not unfamiliar after knowing the blonde for the time he did. He hummed in response, melting under the eye contact when he looked up at him.

The music now playing was familiar in a dreamlike sense, no completely familiar melody or words but a sense of nostalgia and remembrance settled beneath him. It was smooth and sensual, a heavy

bass still pounding in his ear.

Dream moved away from the shorter's face, peeking behind him as if looking for someone, before turning back and gesturing a hand.

"Wanna dance?"

Standing on the tops of his toes to see past Dream's shoulder, he saw the sea of intoxicated horny messes behind them, most hopelessly grinding on each other in some form, the minority loosely jumping out of rhythm with friends. The blonde's face heated up as he realized the intensity of the scene behind him and the implications of what he said.

"Wait, wait, no- Well, I-I mean I didn't mean to like-"

George smiled, setting his halfway empty cup in the trash next to him and letting out a small laugh.

"Dream, I'd love to dance."

There was that goddamn smile again, rays of his sunshine shooting through George to his core. He pondered if he'd ever grow to hate that feeling, one of affection and freshly cut grass in summer digging at his gut.

"C'mon, pretty boy," George continued, flicking the grey newsboy cap on the blonde's head upwards, and sauntering off boldly near the crowd of people.

He didn't want to get right in the middle of everyone, and a part of him loved that he and Dream both gravitated towards the far ends of the action. He wanted to keep these small and special moments between him and Dream.

The two stood there for a second, music notes flooding their senses as they didn't quite know what to do. Despite dancing twenty plus hours weekly, neither could seem to start.

This quickly divulged into a small laughing fit, and the world turned to static aside from the wheezes blessing the brunette's ears.

As they started to sway with the rest of the people surrounding them, enjoying the music, catching small heated glances at the other, George's back was bumped causing him to surge forward into the blonde's chest in front of him, letting out soft grunts from both of the pair at the sudden loss of breath. Dream's hands flew to the boy's hips to steady themselves, stumbling backwards a bit at the motion, George's landing on the blonde's forearms.

When they balanced out, the eye contact was absolutely searing.

George couldn't tell if it was the small bit of alcohol buzzing in his brain, the absurdly bright flashing lights, Dream's stupidly strong body, or the way he had been wanting to find excuses to be this close since they met, but his mind was absolutely spinning.

Perhaps it was a combination of all of them.

Dream's hands felt like anchors, grounding him in reality as his eyebrows furrowed together intently, gaze blistering through himself leaving him to a puddle of silver on the floor.

George had always considered himself silver, a soft vibrant shine you'd never expect until you see it fully perform, but dull enough to get by without much conflict or problems. Maybe this was why Dream's gleaming exterior drew him in so much, a loud and unabashed shine to him, always

glowing.

They stood there completely silent and too entranced for the other to care for far too long, before the large hand on George's hip slowly began to slide over his stomach pulling his back around and flush against the taller's chest.

Hot breath was felt against their ear, as Dream hushed out, "This okay?"

George attempted to get a breathless 'yes' past his lips, but nothing was able to be produced besides a weak nod. Even grueling leg intensives couldn't produce the muscle shaking happening then.

Dream almost appeared afraid to scare the boy in his arms off, large hands having an extra quiver to them as he slowly pressed himself further towards the slender form in front of him.

As the music picked up speed again, so did the blonde's confidence and movements, and George thought he had died and went to heaven.

The blissful heat encasing his entire body was intoxicating and beyond addicting. He found himself pushing his hips back as Dream rolled his own forward, head falling backwards on the boy's shoulder as his breath became labored, willing his yellow eyes to meet his own.

Dream's head was facing mostly forward, tilted down slightly, and eyes pressed shut tightly as his own breath was unsteady.

Warm, warm, warm

All the brunette could process was the warmth encasing him, the sturdy arms he had longed to be around him for so long now there, wholly enwrapping themselves in him. He couldn't ignore the sense of pride that such a golden work of a person had chosen *him* to hold close, to get to know, to learn, to take.

George let his eyes roll back into his head as Dream's hand shifted to rest across his abdomen (almost covering it in its entirety, might he add), and pushing him incredibly closer. Their dance of pushing and pulling had become so much, *so* so much.

George's own arm raised backwards, resting thin fingers against the side of the taller's neck and sighing at the feeling of Dream continuing to press up against him. The overwhelming feelings he was succumbing to led his hand to dig in desperately against the taller's neck, dizzily wondering if would leave a scratch mark or bruise. He couldn't trust his mouth to not say something incredibly stupid or embarrassing at the moment, opting to lock it shut.

Dream did not seem to hold the same sentiment.

"You feel good?" He muttered, through labored breaths.

George felt a small semblance of pride at how far gone the blonde was already, he opened his mouth to say something before Dream cut him off with another hard roll of his hips, and the brunette's other hand flew to his mouth to prevent any obnoxious noises from slipping out.

Dream continued to grind faster, hand flying to the brunette's wrist opening his mouth to say something, hot breath rolling across his ears and neck sending more shudders through his already pleasure wracked body, continuing to grow more and more hot and heated and addicted to the golden sun behind him radiating heat, wholly taking and encapsulating him in-

“ *George why are you trying to fuck my best friend?* ” A slurred voice yelled as he recognized his roommate stumbling towards the pair. Dream’s hands flew from their place on his body, stumbling back at the sound of his friend’s voice as George wanted to scream. Opening his mouth and attempting to hiss out a remark, Sapnap cut him off with an arm thrown around his shoulder.

“See, I was *gonna* get laid, but then we thought ‘Hey, maybe we shouldn’t do this this drunk,’ so I called an Uber and came to pick you up since I promised we’d leave early.”

Each syllable was mumbled together as he was already being moved towards the door. Shoving the brunette’s arm off his shoulder, he turned to say something to Dream.

“Hey we can-”

No one was there when he turned around.

Knitting his eyebrows together he swallowed thickly, Sapnap already turning to grab his hand and pull him back towards the door. George’s mind couldn’t think clearly about the series of events that had just happened, biting his lip and attempting to direct his thinking to a more positive light.

Maybe someone waved him over? A friend?

Maybe he got a call?

He frowned to himself at the realization that their days in the studio may have been numbered together.

“Oh shit, here wait here for a second. I forgot my lanyard with Karl,”

George nodded at the background noise as he heard his friend scamper off to grab his things, breath that was minutes ago labored from the joy that perhaps Dream could be his somehow now short and choppy.

Sapnap came running back a minute later, clambering his way through people, when a blonde giant caught the brunette’s eye. George smiled, about to walk over when he felt his stomach drop at the realization of what he saw.

Dream’s face had a profound layer of pink to it, sheepishly talking with the shorter black-haired boy across from him. He could vaguely make out wheezes and giggles through the party atmosphere.

His heart twisted as he saw the shorter of the pair pull the blonde through the hallway that he knew led to bedrooms.

George hated the stinging he felt behind his eyes at the thought of his friend getting laid, and he despised the aching in his heart as Sapnap pulled him through the halls of the dorm complex completely oblivious.

The brunette pulled the bunny ears from the top of his head running his fingers over the fur of the headband. Soft like silk still, despite the sweat lining the band part. They *did* make him look stunning.

More shine was added to his eyes as he dropped them mindlessly somewhere on the gross carpet of the college dorms.

God, he fucking hated parties. And bunnies were added to that list, too.

Chapter End Notes

im currently working on a collab with an artist friend of mine and a commission for another so these multi-chaps will get less frequent updates for a short time :) so take a long chapter to tide you over <3

[twitter](#)

silence (is loud enough)

Chapter Summary

George wakes up and has a few much-needed conversations, minus the one he really wanted to have.

Chapter Notes

1/2 updates of this fic this week!! next one is going to be very long <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

His head throbbed, despite the lack of alcohol in his system, eyes stinging as he mindlessly reached towards the Advil by the side of his bed, something he grew more and more accustomed to having right next to him as his intensives grew harder.

Everything in his mind screamed at him to go back to sleep and try to forget the events from the night before as best as possible, only to be drowned out by the aching in his stomach from lack of food. He popped two of the orange pills, cool water easing his scratchy throat as he drank from a half-full plastic water bottle also haphazardly next to his bed.

George felt like complete and utter shit.

Groaning at the ache *everywhere*, he rolled over onto his side to check his phone. The first thing in his notifications was a series of texts from his mysterious friend.

From: Clay ;(

Hey are you home safe?

George?

From: Clay ;(

It's been an hour, are you okay?

Please respond, I just wanna make sure you're okay

From: Clay ;(

Three hours now, please text me when you can.

You either got laid, got kidnapped, or your phone died

Ngl, hoping for the third one

George smiled at the unabashed care ridden in the messages, before the events of the night before came flooding back to him.

The lights, the bunny ears, the hot breath on his neck, the grip on his waist, the laughter from a far, the way he stumbled down the hallway with someone he'd never met.

He felt his heart pang at the remembrance that yeah, he and the boy he had a stupidly big crush on had danced so intimately together, but only for him to be brushed aside at the drop of a hat.

He slowly typed out a response, feeling guilty for plaguing his friend with worry.

To: Clay ;(

hey im sorry i didnt text you like i should have i came home and basically crashed

It took a few seconds, but the grey typing bubble made an appearance extremely quickly.

From: Clay ;(

You worried me for a second. Are you drinking water? I'm assuming you're hungover.

To: Clay ;(

my head hurts but i didnt drink that much actually aha. i have water with me now dw.

Clay typed for a bit, only for the bubble to disappear. It took a minute before anything came up again.

From: Clay ;(

Are you okay? You seem off.

George hesitated. He really truly didn't want to bother him with his stupid party drama, but at the same time knew that he wouldn't be able to tell the whole truth to his roommate.

To: Clay ;(

nothing crazy, just people being stupid ig

From: Clay ;(

Wanna talk about it?

The brunette rubbed his tired eyes and typed out as genuine of a response as he could muster through the still somewhat fresh wounds.

To: Clay ;(

i was just w this guy last night and i mustve read the signals wrong because he up and left me after my roommate cockblocked

His friend typed for a few seconds, then stopped, only to start and stop again. George rolled his eyes and shut his phone off next to him, moving his unsteady legs onto the floor next to him and to head into the shared space. One of his hands scratched at his neck as he let out a soft yawn, sliding into one of the island's cheap bar stools.

Sapnap was already in the kitchen, nursing a cup of warm coffee across the counter.

"Well, you look like shit," George started, giving as much of a smile as he could, as his friend let out a gruff laugh.

"You don't look any better, to be fair."

The brunette tried to laugh, the same memories of Dream replaying in his head over and over again. He doubted his roommate would even remember anything from the night before.

"I woke up to a shit load of texts from Dream,"

Well, George stood corrected. He hummed in response, letting his head fall into his folded arms.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. A lot of 'Where's George?' and 'Is he okay?'"

The shorter scoffed at the notion and moved to dig the heel of his palms into his eyes. It was hard to believe that after getting laid the first thing the blonde would do would be to text his childhood best friend about someone else.

"I'm sure he did."

Sapnap opened his mouth to speak as his eyebrows knitted together in confusion.

"Did something happen? I thought he was the whole reason you wanted to go last night?"

George sighed, letting his face use both of his arms as a pillow and take in the cool calm atmosphere of their kitchen. He idly wondered when his Advil would kick in and get rid of the pain overtaking all of his body.

“I mean, considering he found some quick fuck right after you pulled me away to leave, I don’t know why he’d be so concerned about me.”

The taller’s face flushed at the notion of his drunken state the night prior, before letting his face dip into a small frown.

“That- That doesn’t sound like Dream. Besides, why would-”

There was a short pause as the brunette tilted his head up to make eye contact, eye bags heavily drooping and hair a complete mess. Silently, there was an acknowledgement of knowing.

Sapnap moved across the island to sit on the stool next to his friend, giving a tender smile as he awkwardly moved an arm over the boy’s shoulders. George rolled his eyes giving in to the touch and leaning his head on his friend’s arm.

Throughout their time living together, the pair was rarely physical with each other, but in that moment both of them could tell it was exactly what they needed.

The room smelled of coffee and clean air, tranquility laying in a blanket overtop their beings and embracing them in soft warmth, the comfort of having each other. Neither knew how long they sat there basking in each other’s presence, just enjoying the care they were giving up.

“I think we both deserve a rest day. Go get your phone and shit, I’ll put something on my laptop,” Sapnap said, breaking the silence finally.

The brunette nodded, moving away from the warmth of his friend and standing up.

Sapnap *was* a loud and obnoxious roommate who was awkward about talking about anything he wasn’t well versed on, but he knew when his comfort was needed and George would forever be grateful for that.

He smiled as he felt another vibration against his leg, quickly trying to answer the message he knew was from his mysterious friend.

“Dude, who the hell are you texting so much?” Sapnap asked pointedly, shoving more popcorn into his mouth and nudging the elbow of his friend.

Clay had been texting George a majority of the day, which wasn’t too out of the ordinary but his tone had become very comforting and caring despite not knowing how the brunette was feeling or even about the depths of what had happened the night prior.

“It’s- It’s an odd story, actually,” George started slowly, forcing the smile off his face at the dumb joke Clay made to look his roommate in the eyes.

“Okay, well tell me, because you’ve been smiling like an idiot at your phone since we sat down.”

The pair was on Sapnap’s bed watching all the Harry Potter movies back to back from the taller’s

laptop, it was a nice way to escape from both of their grueling previous nights.

George rolled his eyes, trying to bite back the redness in his cheeks.

“I’m a bit, well, conflicted I’d say,” He started, moving his eyes to try and sense any sort of discomfort or boredom in his friend’s eyes to find him at rapt attention.

“In one of my classes I accidentally joined with my camera so I was the only one with it on for a second-”

“-How are you so dumb all of the time-”

“- *Shut up!* It was mistake,”

Sapnap gave a laugh to that, shoving another handful of popcorn in his mouth, and making a hand gesture to signal ‘go on’. The brunette folded his hands in his lap before continuing.

“Right, well this *guy* private messages me like calling me cute and flirting with me, and at first I thought it was some idiot theatre-head who thought fake flirting with gay people is hilarious, but then we started talking, and-”

“-Through *Zoom* private messages?” Sapnap quipped, obnoxious smile growing wider.

“Not the point,” George hissed, lightly punching his upper arm. “As I was *saying*, we started talking in class all the time and he seems like a really genuine person. So, he gave me his phone number and we’ve been texting a lot.”

Sapnap nodded, setting the bowl next to him and leaning both his elbows on his crossed legs.

“And you’ve never seen this guy’s face? Or heard his voice? Yet you’re down bad?”

George scoffed, dramatically holding a hand to his chest before giving him a quizzical look.

“I didn’t mention that, but no, no I haven’t seen his face or heard his voice. For all I know he could be some random gross stalker trying to kidnap me.”

The taller laughed at that, shifting his legs to straighten out and lay on his back. He turned his head to the cross-legged brunette before attempting to give advice.

“So, where’s the conflict? You like him, right?”

George sighed, trying to keep his blush to a minimum with his thoughts on Dream, as while Sapnap was his roommate, he was Dream’s childhood best friend. He had to tread lightly before everything he said got spilled back to him.

“Well, there’s a bit. But- But mostly it’s because of, uhm, Dream.”

“Go on,”

The brunette searched for humor or malice in the boy’s tone to find none. He shifted against the mattress hands moving up to gesture while explaining.

“I *know* Dream. I mean, obviously not as well as you, but I do know him well from time in the studio and the sparse times I see him elsewhere, and I-I really do think I like him. And, don’t get me wrong I definitely feel something for Clay but it’s harder because I have the feeling he’s not gonna be who I think he is, or is just using me or something. The anonymity of it all is terrifying.

But after last night, I-”

“-Can you explain again what happened last night?” Sapnap cut in, face slightly red at the notion of his sobriety from the party. George rolled his eyes with a soft laugh.

“Did Dream not tell you? Me and him were, er, dancing, and then you totally cockblocked us.”

The taller laughed putting a hand on his face.

“Would you be shocked if I told you that’s not the first time?”

“Not in the slightest, dipshit,” George deadpanned, causing more laughs from his friend. Sapnap wiped at the corners of his eyes before turning back slightly confused.

“If I cockblocked you guys last night, then why don’t you just ask him out?”

The brunette’s face faltered. He really did want to believe the flirting and kind gestures were because Dream truly did like him, but every second passed he felt more and more fear that he was supposed to become a one night stand only to never speak again.

As much as getting railed would probably help his mental state and stress, it would be canceled out by the anxiety of never being able to speak with the guy he’d been hopelessly crushing on for over a month.

“I told you earlier, when I turned around to tell him we were leaving and that we could talk later, he was gone. And then before we fully left I saw him dash off with some guy down the hallways I know led to bedrooms. It’s pretty obvious,”

The brunette added a soft laugh at the end of his statement to try and bring the mood back to being playful, but noticed he very clearly didn’t succeed when Sapnap’s face held a firm frown.

“I’ve known him for years, that’s- odd of him. Well, okay so all this to say that what?”

George rubbed his arm, noting the vibration against his leg again.

“I don’t know. I’m gonna see Dream in the studio soon, I’d assume, so a part of me wants to be honest and try to ask him how he feels about a date, but it’s confusing after everything. And on the other hand, Clay is a sweetheart and has been nothing but the best. Hell, he texted me last night before the party to make sure I was gonna be safe about shit. But it makes me iffy that I don’t know *who* he is, if that makes sense?”

The taller nodded, sitting up and leaning back on one of his arms before giving his best shot at help. His face looked a little more dusted red and his words seemed memorized, but it flew over the brunette’s hair, being brushed off as just the concept of guys being foreign.

“As nice as Clay seems, since you’re more comfortable with- with Dream, I’d say something to him. He’s chill about stuff like this so if anything you’ll still have a banger friendship. Then you could move onto mystery man.”

George nodded, the very prospect of speaking to the blonde somewhat terrifying after everything, but based on the conversation he was having with his roommate, Dream wasn’t as out of reach as he once deemed to be.

“Thanks, Sap. This- This means a lot, by the way, that I can talk to you about it,” George said, smiling at the boy next to him who rolled his eyes and laughed.

“Yeah, yeah, cut the sappy bullshit I’m trying to get *both* of you laid so I can stop hearing about your romance problems,” He joked, taking a pillow and hitting George in the chest with it lightly. The brunette laughed and flipped him off before clicking to continue the movie and open his phone.

From: Clay ;(

Georgie where’d you gooooo

In the middle of me trying to call you cute too, that’s rude you know.

To: Clay ;(

sorry , was talking to my roommate im back now :]

and i dont see what’s cute about a big ass t-shirt and sweats but sure

From: Clay ;(

It’s not the clothes it’s you in them, sweetheart

George forced down a blush as he felt his heart stutter just a bit at the comment.

He thought back to the hands on his hips from the night before, touch seemingly still there if he thought hard enough.

It was very easy to imagine Dream saying the things Clay had been texting him. He hated that he was constantly, subconsciously or not, thinking about him.

He took that night off, eating ice cream and watching shitty youtube videos with Sapnap, the comfort of Clay’s texts always there. George didn’t feel *too* bad about responding to the boy as his roommate was texting someone at the time, too.

Not going to the studio was odd, but not totally unwelcome. In all honesty, it was nice to have a day off.

When he arrived at the studio the next night, his heart started racing at the blonde tapper already in a very intense routine. He sat down, letting the harsh sounds of his taps fill his ears as he unabashedly stared at the tall boy’s form, upper body working effortlessly to keep his center of balance while managing tricks the brunette could only dream of.

The misconception that dancers are only strong with their legs was a total lie, especially for men who had to lift people like they were nothing at any hour of the day without tiring. If anyone were

to look at Dream, those preconceived notions would instantly fall apart.

His dancing seemed more intense, sounds with more energy and spark to them with more attack and precision (although, at his level he *always* had precision), almost as if he were venting.

George knew the feeling, forcing the stress and pain from the inside into sharp turns and sharp leaps, leaving his muscles with an extra ache. He'd give anything to see what was happening inside the blonde's brain.

The brunette slipped his flats on, not bothering to take his warm-up clothes off as he only wanted to do barre work for the night.

As he started his first combo, the blonde's music ended with it's signature hits he'd grown to love, and after the air fell silent, he continued freestyling a few extra counts.

George looked over to the boy, feeling his emotions bubbling high as he rolled out his ankles.

"Stressed?"

Dream turned, his eyes falling soft for a few seconds before giving a small smile and nodding.

They shared the room that night in comfortable silence, only speaking again once they were turning off the lights to leave, eyes droopy and bodies tired.

The walk back to George's dorm was peaceful, the air surrounding them full of warmth. George could swear he could hear his blood pumping in his ears when the blonde stopped him before going inside. He laid a hand on the shorter's arm opening his mouth to say something before motioning forward.

Is he gonna-

Time froze and all he could feel was the pounding of his pulse and the butterflies banging around against his stomach and the blonde bent down and-

Strong arms wrapped around his waist as George felt the flutters and anticipation disappear.

Granted, he was a *very* large person, so the hug was the warmest and most comforting thing he had felt in what felt like years. He let his eyes close as he turned his head to hear the taller's heart thump by his ear.

They stood like that for a minute, basking in the closeness of each other, before Dream pulled away and gave a soft wave.

"Bye, George."

The smile across the blonde's face was nothing short of a sunrise as he turned to walk away.

He really has me wrapped around his finger, doesn't he?

Walking into his dorm, the pink on his face from the experience didn't seem to wash off even after a long shower and deep into the night. Just as he was shutting off his light to sleep, his phone buzzed.

From: Clay ;(

Goodnight, sweetheart

George sighed.

To: Clay ;(

goodnight idiot

George hadn't considered himself a very romantic person after everything that had happened to him with relationships and anything romance-related in general. To even let himself consider anything serious behind initial coy and flirty words was a terrifying ocean of water that he knew would only leave a metallic taste in his mouth and the feeling of being in second place sinking into his bones.

He had always had relationships and boyfriends slip through his fingers, just out of his grasp and away from his hold. He was born into a life of silver in each and every aspect, material, and body coating his skin and overpowering the work he pushed on with.

Love was filled with heartache, pain, and suffering, only a nuisance for other people to destroy and lose themselves.

George didn't want to live that life. The fear of giving himself up wholly to someone and trusting them with the broken pieces he knew he was made up of would hold him back from anything.

Or, it used to, at least.

Dream dripped gold, rolling off of his skin in strong drips for people to follow and chase. He was an entity that everyone aspired to be or to be with, someone the brunette would see as off-limits almost all of the time.

Now he had been presented with the most beautiful boy who wanted him just as much as he did, and for the first time in his life he felt like he'd be okay enough to fall, to let himself jump into the cool pool of warmth and love enwrapping him in gold, enough to meld together with his own silver gleam.

George stared at the number on the door, the small 404 being what had tied him down and grounded him through months of tiring work and grueling emotions. A finger brushed the metal before drifting down to the handle.

He was going to jump into the depths of the golden trail he had been left. Taking a deep breath and holding it, he turned and pushed open the creaky door.

"Hey Dream I-"

When he opened his eyes, an eerie and terrifying silence fell over him. The room was empty,

without a tall blonde in sight.

Chapter End Notes

second update of this for the week is coming within a few days! i cannot express my excitement for where this fic is going :)

another shout out to my lovely beta lex, this wouldn't be possible without them <3

-fia <3

[twitter](#)

falling

Chapter Summary

George confides in Sapnap (again), yet comes home with even more frustration than he intended.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George could convince himself one miss at the studio meant little to nothing. I mean, even he took a day off every week, and Dream most definitely deserved the same.

However, the next day as his heart beat rapidly against his chest grazing over the metal label with the numbers 404 etched in he pushed the door open to find dead silence and an empty room.

Dream didn't show up to the studio for three days, and each night the brunette walked back to his dorm embarrassed and without any work being done. He hated the look of pity Sapnap gave each time he walked through their front door, speed walking to his room to fall asleep in his still clean dancewear. He hated the awkward words his roommate would try to give in the mornings after another day home without a smile on his face. He hated the fact that he had grown so *attached* to someone he didn't even know the real first *name* of.

He promised himself he wouldn't fall again, promised that he wouldn't let his silver-clad arms be twisted and broken again.

George continued to stare daggers into his cereal, more bitter that he was willing to ask a guy out (something he hadn't even considered doing in years) and was now being basically ghosted by him.

Sapnap sat next to him on the couch, frantically typing away on his phone and catching side glances at the brunette. He felt like he was about to snap at the very *obvious* nature that the boy was texting, presumably Dream, about him.

"Are you gonna keep staring at me or tell me you're texting Dream?"

The black-haired boy jumped at the sudden comment, instantly locking his phone and looking back with a sheepish grin. George tilted his head giving a nonverbal 'really?' before turning back to his bowl.

"If it makes you feel any better, he's swearing up and down that he's not ghosting you. Apparently, he was asked to film shit to help promo the winter concert."

George's eyes softened at that and almost wanted to kick himself at the assumptions he had been making. He had other reasons why he could be mad at Dream, but this one felt like the least important. Shaking his head, he shifted against the cushions.

"Can you just give me his number? This all would be way-"

"- *No!* "

George was taken aback by the sudden urgency in his friend's voice, fear lacing his face.

"Uhm," He started, almost laughing at the weird behavior. "What?"

Sapnap started to laugh too, a quick and very odd laugh for the boy to be making.

"He- He's very private about a lot. Always has been. I-I'm sure he'd give you his number in person, but he'd beat my ass if I did."

Skeptical, the brunette backed off, somewhat understanding the privacy issue as he knew about Dream's past history of being an idiotic teenager.

"Well, alright. Is he gonna be there tonight then?"

Sapnap glanced at his phone, re-reading the message far too many times over to be considered normal. George had grown accustomed to the enigma that was his roommate and shook the thoughts from his mind.

"He said yeah. Don't blame me if he isn't though, that guy's an interesting one."

"You're telling me," George muttered, moving back to his cereal and taking a spoonful into his mouth.

He mulled over in his head what to do exactly when he *did* see Dream. A very large part of his wanted to walk up to his stupidly tall self and dig into him for completely leaving him at the Halloween party then blatantly ignoring him for days on end without having any way of contact, only to tell him he had *many* other candidates in line to date him and that he'd take up on *them* instead.

The sane part of him knew that the second he saw the blonde's scattered freckles and vibrant green eyes he'd go weak in the knees and do whatever he was told.

Grumbling against his food, he heard the boy next to him snort and continue typing.

"What's so funny?"

"Nothing. He's just something, isn't he?"

He rolled his eyes, trying to keep the vivid imagery of the tapper and sounds of his voice from playing on repeat in his mind.

The halls were growing colder as fall kept on, George recognized as he trudged his bag and body through the corridors he'd memorized down to the number of squares on the shitty carpet. He knew there was no way he'd pass up the opportunity to *finally* see the blonde again after ages of being left with dust.

The rooms were basically sound proof, done so that different styles of dance could be in rooms directly next to each other with little complaints about noise or music styles being distracting, which made it hard to gauge whether or not the elusive tapper was behind the large door.

George circled his thin fingers around the silver handle and swallowed. Deep down, he knew why

he was nervous, but after repeating the same pattern for three days in a row, he had grown tired and frustrated with the continuous anxiety building up in his system only to be let down and disappointed.

This is different. Sapnap said he's going to be here. It's going to be fine.

He let his eyes flutter closed and huffed out a soft breath. Without opening his eyes for a second, he opened the door, for his ears to be flooded with music.

George wanted to smile until he recognized a soft piano rather than a thumping rhythm or high energy beat.

When he opened his eyes he felt the pit of his stomach drop, eyes sinking and taking in the sight.

His Dream, *his* tall messy blonde-headed tapper, with a clumsy smile far too wide, face flushed far too red to be considered normal, with his hands on the hips of a shorter ballet dancer. Not just any dancer, though. George recognized the same neatly tucked away black hair previously being lit up by blue and pink flashing lights in an expansive living room, the same thing frame, holding onto the forearms of the brunette's friend.

"Okay, come on lift me *one* more time, then-"

The black haired boy stopped short in his sentence when he noticed the blonde staring off just passed him, concern flooding his face.

George felt rooted in his spot, feet digging through the floor and holding himself in his place, just as old teacher's would claim dancer's ought to do to increase turn precision, as green eyes transfixed onto his own.

He opened his mouth, grip on the door handle loosening almost falling to his side.

"I-I'm sorry for interrupting, I'll leave you two be," George said softly, giving the most of a smile he could.

Especially in the dance world, one night stands were almost never brought up after they happened, even if they stayed within specific casts or groups, as romance was not often sought out for within small groups (somewhat of a curse to even try). The fact that Dream and the mystery black haired boy were continuing to flirt, and practicing a dance they were most certainly *not* partners in was something basically exclusive to significant others or people in search of a romantic relationship.

George remembered the blonde's own words of being stupid *dumb* at ballet. It made him ache that some random boy could get him to overlook those insecurities and try. He started to re-open the door and back out of the room, turning partially around towards the door.

"No, George, it's- we-"

"-Dream," He attempted to interrupt. "I'll find another studio to work in for the night it's-"

The blonde pulled away from the grip on the shorter, hastily walking towards George, taps clacking against the floor.

"-You don't need to do that he was-"

"- *Dream.*"

George's tone was sharper, but laced with more exasperation as he looked back at the concerned ballerina in the corner of the room and the frenzied tapper above him. The eye contact was begging the brunette to stay, to do *something* other than leave the room, but what was he supposed to do? Third wheel doing barre exercises and listen to the excruciating pain of his crush being with someone they were probably going to go out with soon?

"Have a nice night. Both of you," He added, giving a soft smile to the still frowning boy in the back of the studio. Without another word, he slipped out of the room, shutting the door and walking as briskly as he could back through the hallways and wings to his dorm building.

He felt the sensation of stinging in the back of his eyes, before frustratingly shoving the heels of his hands into them, wishing he could dig his own emotions up and throw them onto the ground smashing them to bits.

He *knew* Dream was too good, too perfect, too *golden* , for him to even have a chance at trying.

He should be in the studio working on strength and intricacy training for the concert, drilling as hard as he could so he could perform at his best like he always had, but the *stupid* idea of even possibly getting into a relationship had fucked with his head so much he truly couldn't think right.

He aggressively fumbled with his key, jamming it into the lock and pushing the door open with little care. Vaguely registering Sapnap's presence and the noise of his laptop playing some sort of movie, he continued off into his room without a word, throwing down his dance bag and shutting the door behind him. Seconds later, a force came barrelling into his room, anxiety written all over the boy's blushing face.

"Dude, look, you saw *none* of that ri--"

"What?" The brunette cut off, looking at his younger friend who fell silent at that for a few seconds.

"You- You actually didn't see that?"

"See what, dumbass? Look, I just had a really shitty--"

"-Thank fucking *God* ," Sapnap interrupted, sitting down next to George on his bed, face light years more relaxed than seconds prior.

"No offense, but I could not care in the slightest who or what you were doing out there, I just wasted another night I could've been in here studying."

Sapnap blushed at the initial comment before his expression turned perplexed.

"Wasted? But Dream told me he--"

"-Yeah, he *was* there, with the same guy he slept with on Halloween. They looked real happy too," George continued, sarcasm and frustration dripping from his words. The younger's smile grew sour, moving to grab his phone.

"He- He is so *weird* . I'm almost positive he didn't get laid at that party, so I have no clue why he'd--"

" *Sapnap* ."

The boy stopped talking, looking down at the brunette's tired eyes. George wanted to curl into a

ball and disappear from the world, forget about ballet, and school, and Dream, and honestly anyone attempting to interact with him.

He just wanted peace, after the hell of a rollercoaster he had been on in the past week.

“Just- I’m gonna sleep now, okay? Don’t text Dream anything about this ‘for me’ or something, I’m honestly done with the whole thing. Can you leave me be, please?”

Sapnap slowly nodded, a hand moving to rub the brunette’s shoulder softly before standing up.

“Try and rest, yeah?” He said, halfway out the door.

“I will.”

The smile George gave was weak and full of doubt, but the taller took it, gingerly shutting the door behind him. Through the thin walls of their dorm, George recognized the sound of a voice other than Sapnap’s whispering back to him. He rolled his eyes and moved to bury himself under the covers of his bed, small pillow held against his chest for comfort and warmth as he turned on his side.

He moved for his charger, and as he unlocked his phone he noticed a text message.

From: Clay ;(

Hey just checking up on you. I think you’re at the studio but not too sure, just wanted to say goodnight.

Despite the sentiment, George felt his stomach twist in a knot at the concept of a sugary sweet goodnight text. Clay was a *stranger* to him, a total enigma, probably seeing people every day only to continue to string George on with pet names and dumb sexual lines.

George knew he was over exaggerating, overthinking, and honestly just so damn angry at the fact that he let himself get *into* the situation in the first place.

With furrowed brows, he shut his phone off, ignoring the message and his other notifications that came flooding in.

His lights quickly shut off after that, letting himself be upset under the cover of night.

Dream, his friends from high school, hell, even his dipshit of a *roommate* was able to pull people, able to embrace the love they felt wholeheartedly and not feel so distraught and distrusting of the world and people.

He thought of Dream, the person who now very clearly wanted to use the brunette as a one night stand while having other people he was actually interested on the sidelines.

He thought of Clay, someone who didn’t care to tell George anything about himself, who had no intention of ever showing his face or even meeting up with him, being seen as just a toy to flirt with and use lines as a test before moving onto his real life.

Bullshit.

George's vision was *not* cloudy. Definitely not.

Complete, and utter, bullshit.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for all the love and support :) means the absolute world. another huge thank you to my beta, lex, they're amazing!

-fia <3

[twitter](#)

why can't he

Chapter Summary

George finally talks with Dream, and seeks comfort in someone he wouldn't've guessed cared.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The studio was empty the next day. Not completely empty, per se, but he saw the blonde push out of the door with frustration laced on his face, not even looking at the brunette approaching.

No, he did not end up sitting on the dance flooring doing weak stretches and trying to hold himself together.

He really didn't want to go tonight, either. What point was there? Dream was clearly stressed and also *seeing* someone. Not to mention, blatantly ignoring him and being cold for the few seconds they had interacted.

George had to drag himself to even think about putting on his proper clothes.

The materials and padding stared at him against his closet door, taunting him and the mere idea of trying to see the taller.

George never put in effort like this for other people, let alone those he was interested in. Perhaps it was because he truly saw the side of Dream that was genuine, and kind, and nothing short of an angel. Affectionate and dopey, and nothing like the pompous or stone cold boys he'd tried to get with in the past. Dream was *real*.

Or at least, he thought he was. Dream didn't even want to tell him his real *name* let alone go out with him.

If there was one thing he'd learned over years of heartbreak and emotional turmoil in both the career path he loved most, and the people he cared for the deepest, it was that gold would always seek gold, and silver would be left with bronze.

Dream was golden. He was a pure metal sparkling with skill and effortless abundance, male tap dancers were prizes, they were seen as top class, the best of the best. Not to mention, the blonde was incredibly skilled, and truly beyond amazing at what he did.

George was silver. He was born dripping with grey, rolling off his skin and through his languid movements. He would be nothing more than a background dancer to whatever soloist was there, always just behind them, never in the limelight. With people, he was the same, always not close enough to reach a top spot in people's hearts, always the backup friend, always the replacement.

George was sure the black haired boy Dream was lifting was golden, too, heart bore from the sun and carved from love.

He had shoved his sheets off of his wallowing body and threw himself up to get dressed, throwing

his leotard, dance belt, tights and trash pants onto his bed as he practically ripped the large hoodie covering his frame off of him.

George was out the door within a few minutes, not even bothering to mention anything to Sappnap. His shoes thumped against the floor as he walked with earnesty down the winding halls and to the building with the studios.

He only stopped his intensity once the door of his desires came into view, feet wheeling to a stop as his hand gently wrapped around the door handle. A wave of nausea ran over his body as stared at his hand, eyebrows furrowed together. If Dream wasn't behind the door, he'd look like an idiot. He'd be a fool for thinking the blonde would ever come back to their studio.

For once, he squeezed his eyes shut and shook his head. He would *not* let himself be second ever again.

Pressing the door open, loud music and taps flooded his ears, and when he glanced up, he almost felt guilty at the pounding in his heart.

Dream was more than focused, he looked downright pissed off. His sounds were aggressive and heavy, even sloppy in some areas from the sheer force he was putting onto the floor.

George stood dumbfounded at the blonde, for he'd never seen the gentle giant of a man be so *angry* and aggressive. Vaguely he remembered him explaining that as a teen, tap was nice to express anger because of the intensity of its moves and what it required, but he'd never seen it before.

The music was coming to a close, and one of the ending sequences he'd remembered by heart had shifted. Steps being replaced with stomps, both his toe and heel tap sending loud rings through his ears, and the double toe stands sped up and with a heavier end. When the last note of the booming audio stopped, all sound ceased from the room, and George was left to stare at the panting blonde, sweat dripping from his hairline. He assumed he hadn't stopped since he got there.

The brunette slowly moved to the barre, awaiting the blonde to say something first.

As he put his shoes on, stretched Dream said nothing.

After a few combos he had begun to realize he wasn't going to.

It took two run-throughs of the blonde's routine for George to speak up.

"So, how's your boyfriend doing?" He started, innocently enough.

Dream stopped midway through his routine, completely uncharacteristic of him. The music continued loudly as he scoffed and looked at the brunette for the first time that night.

"What boyfriend?"

George blinked. He was *trying* to be nice, but Dream only seemed more annoyed by the question.

"Hello? *Your* boyfriend?"

Dream turned around, shoes clicking as he walked to go shut off his music before walking back to the shorter, much closer this time.

"Who said I have a boyfriend?"

When George looked up he felt sick to his stomach, the smirk on the blonde's face setting off all sorts of alarm bells in his mind. He *knew* that look, he'd seen it over and over again. Random boys at a party with no respect for their significant others trying to get their dicks wet whenever they could.

George had had far too many mornings awoken to an empty bed and a blocked number, only to receive speed walks past in hallways and avoidance of eye contact.

Fuck that.

"You're such an asshole," George spat, crossing his arms and stepping back against the ballet bar. Dream's face immediately molded into one of fiery concern, only causing more confusion in the brunette's stomach.

"What? What's wrong did- did I do something?"

So much. You did so much Dream.

George was never one to let the fuse explode. He'd keep it locked inside until it all came bursting over in angry tears against his pillow and yells when no one else was home.

But he was tired of dealing with golden boys who had no clue what it was like to be second acting like hot shit.

"*Yes* . Yes you *did* , Dream."

Dream's chest started rising and falling that bit heavier, and as he opened his mouth to respond, George cut him off.

"I- I thought that maybe, just maybe, you were actually somewhat interested in me, or- or *something* , but you're just like every other guy I've ever had to deal with!"

Dream's eyebrows furrowed together, and George couldn't tell apart the anger from confusion within the golden irises. George took a step towards him, letting everything go.

"You just wanted fuck me and- and then find someone else you *actually* cared about, right? That's why you scampered off with that guy the second Sapnap pulled me away from you on Halloween, right? You claimed to care, to- to be *different* , but you're not."

Dream shook his head, mouth agape as his hands started gesturing as he stuttered. George could feel his heart stammering in his chest violently, cheeks hot and red with all the embarrassment and fear culminating from the past months of events with Dream.

"How- How could you ever think that? That *guy* I was with is one of my friends who-"

"- *Lying* about your relationship status is *not* gonna make me want to sleep with you Dream, so you can quit it," George interrupted, pulling his eyes up to make direct contact with the blonde who was now sputtering, frustration lacing his voice.

"*He's not my boyfriend!* Why the fuck aren't you even trying to listen to me right now?"

George laughed coldly, letting his arms cross before responding back with just as much bite.

"You're such an idiot! Maybe it's because you left this studio empty for *days* , only for me to see you holding and laughing with the same boy you slept with at that party, have you ever considered

that? After- After you *flirted* with me, and pretended to care, you just up and leave the second you had the chance with someone else!”

Dream’s eyes burned into him, words becoming more malicious with each syllable, and the brunette felt he’d break if he had to listen to more.

“I *never* slept with him! What the hell are you even talking about right now? Why can’t you just believe me?”

George shut his mouth for a second, taking in the poisonous words and letting them sink in. Rage filled his blood as his fingernails dug into his arms.

“I’m so sick and tired of people like you who’ve always been on top never giving a damn about how what they do affects others-”

“-That’s what this is about? Status? Stop projecting your jealousy that I’ve actually gotten recognition and you haven’t onto me! That’s not *my* fault!”

The words left Dream’s mouth faster than he could catch them, spilling ugly and gross misrepresentations with little care. His eyes shot open as soon as they fell from his mouth, but George’s already tired eyes began to droop at the statement, body like glass breaking under the pressure.

Despite how he tried to act like gold, he’d always be silver. If this conversation proved anything, that was it.

“No, no, George, I-I didn’t mean that, that’s not true at all you-”

“*Fuck* you, Dream,” George breathed out shakily, body moving quick to pick up his bag and tennis shoes as the clouds in his eyes grew larger.

“George, please, that- that was so out of line and, and not true at all, I just-”

The brunette stood back up at his full height, ignoring the heartbroken and regretful eyes in front of him. There was a beat of silence before he spoke.

“I never want to reach the top if it meant I’d become like you,” George whispered, tearing his eyes away from the blonde (he ignored the shiny film in the taller’s eyes as he turned), and walked out of the silent studio.

He wasn’t going to be used again. He refused.

His phone had been blowing up since the night prior, and he didn’t need to check to see who it was.

George felt bad in a way for ignoring Clay how he was, but as he let out soft sniffles while nursing an iced coffee during his dance education history lecture with tears staining his rosy cheeks, he wasn’t up for having conversation with him.

He had already been acting short since seeing Dream and the black haired boy together, and eventually he stopped responding. Tentatively, he decided to turn over his phone and see the new messages from during the class period.

From: Clay ;(

I can see your name I know you're here.

And I know you're not paying attention.

George, please, I just want to know that you're okay. You've been so off these past days.

From: Clay ;(

I'm just worried about you okay?

Anything? Just one text? Please? I'll let you off the hook after if you just talk to me.

I want to help you.

George felt frustration pool in his gut. What made Clay different? The answer was nothing. Nothing made him different from every other dickhead around, trying to get in his pants before up and leaving, gone without a trace.

Without thinking, he tapped on the camera and turned it to face him, getting a quick and only half blurry shot of his puffy face and eyes. Tears were very clearly shining on his face, but as his vision clouded, he didn't care while pressing send.

To: Clay ;(

[Attachment: 1 Image]

there, happy?

George knew Clay would see the picture, immediately be grossed out at the brunette's gully appearance and ghost him. But what did he care? He was just another stupid idiotic-

From: Clay ;(

I'm so sorry :(Can you talk to me at all?

George's eyebrows furrowed, effectively tuning out the presentation going on in the background.

To: Clay ;(

why do you care? dont you just wanna fuck me or smth

From: Clay ;(

Where the hell did you get that impression?

I care about you, George. You don't deserve whatever's happened to you.

George felt his heart go a little mushy at that, biting his lip as he hesitated on what to say. What could he say? What was he supposed to say?

Maybe, just once, he'd give the truth.

To: Clay ;(

i got into an argument with this guy i really really liked. i thought he was different than all the other shitty dance guys, but im pretty sure he's lying to me about having a boyfriend and was just trying to get a quick fuck. theres more but he said some things and im just hurt at the loss

There was a stile, grey typing bubble appearing then disappearing for a minute or two. When a message finally came through, George laughed. A genuine smile rode on his face.

From: Clay ;(

He sounds like a douchebag.

From: Clay ;(

You can keep talking to me. I wanna know who I have to give a nice punch to the gut when I see them

Rolling his eyes softly, he glanced up at the black screen and white text among the others on the screen in front of him.

Clay Adams

Perhaps he'd find comfort in the ones he'd least expect. For once, he'd let himself.

Chapter End Notes

<33 updates will be faster now that mtitid is over:)

[twitter](#)

warm sugar

Chapter Summary

George has found comfort, yet can't help destroying himself while trying to reach perfection

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The wind began to blow colder than it usually would. The normal chill covering George's shoulders had become a full-body sting at the intensity some days, despite it still being November.

It had been a few days since he had spilled his guts to Clay, tears falling onto his phone as he frantically typed out frazzled sentences of hopelessness and ache. The mystery boy had been nothing short of livid from what he could tell through texts, proper punctuation after strings of curses and sentences of deep protection acting as a replacement for the physical comfort he'd been needing for some time.

It felt nice for once to have someone who truly seemed like he'd do anything for him, one of those long-term dreams that always seemed to fade away into dust had finally begun to grow back in.

George felt crazy, honestly for how head over heels he felt when Clay would compliment him, text him strings of genuine sentences, use stupid pet names on a whim, or the paragraphs of comfort towards him and bitterness to those who had even barely wronged him.

He couldn't lie and say the fact he had no clue what the person looked like wasn't concerning, or at least a bit disheartening. Each time he'd mention it, Clay's reply seemed to grow more and more guilty, almost as if there was something more as to why the blonde couldn't show his face or even a small portion of him.

It wasn't because he was afraid he wouldn't be *attracted* to him (from the words they'd exchanged and the boy's personality, there was no way he couldn't find however he looked nothing short of endearing), it was more of a vulnerability thing. He had never felt self conscious in sending random selfies or videos of him, both prompted and unprompted, and it was sometimes sad to him he never got to see the boy's smile or *any* part of himself for that matter. Deep down he knew there was some sort of reason, but that didn't mean it didn't hurt at times.

His room was quiet, a winter candle on his desk being his only light source aside from his phone as he lay on his side, a soft smile tugging at his lips buried under covers smothering him in warmth

From: Clay ;(

Nobody gave you trouble today right?

To: Clay ;(

dream wasn't in the studio, or if he was he came earlier, so no

The memory made him wince. Despite the anger and frustration he felt towards the tapper, a part of him longed to hear his obnoxious sounds as he warmed up and stretched over the barre. The words he had yelled still rang clear in his mind, and the sting they left wouldn't fade any time soon.

From: Clay ;(

Good. You'd tell me if something did happen right?

George rolled his eyes, lips still upturned.

To: Clay ;(

yes, idiot

To: Clay ;(

although i know i'd be the one who'd have to hold you back from causing actual harm.

From: Clay ;(

You know I'd do anything you'd ask me to

George hesitated, the words on the tip of his tongue but not wanting to push the unspoken rule and boundary he had set for them. It took a moment of working up the courage in his head before he hastily typed what he wanted and pushed send, embarrassment creeping up his neck in shades of light pink.

To: Clay ;(

except show me what you look like

The messages paused, read receipt of the boy showing he was indeed there, however. His already pounding heart thumped that much harder with shaky anticipation, in fear of a cold response or somehow crossing a blurry line drawn in the sand for him.

His heart leapt when he saw the new message.

From: Clay ;(

You've been good, I'll tell you

The subtle praise made the brunette feel lightheaded before another text flew in.

From: Clay ;(

I'm really tall and have dirty blonde hair

As George tried to picture something he could mentally use as his image of Clay, the only thing that came to mind was a stupid freckled face with sweat dripping from his brow after dancing for hours, obnoxious smirk glued to his cheeks. It almost made his heart sink that there was a possibility they'd be similar.

In full honesty, Clay was practically what George had imagined Dream would've been. Protective and flirty, constantly watching over him, being a blanket of comfort through hard nights of blurry eyes and small shakes, it was everything the brunette had imagined his tapper to be like. Obviously, he was wrong about Dream, the thought still a sensitive thing to fully process, and the guilt of Clay acting as a sort of substitute or 'better version' was something he couldn't decide was a good or bad idea.

Perhaps somewhere in between.

He shook his head at the thoughts, now a frazzled mess of two blondes swimming in his brain as he tried to hone in on the conversation at hand.

George always liked to push his luck when it came to texting, and since the shady lines now had been cleared he figured it would be a great time to do what he did best, whine.

To: Clay ;(

i said show not tell :(

To: Clay ;(

you've seen almost all of me before ive even seen any of you

From: Clay ;(

We could make it all of you before me

George swallowed at the idea, having to bring a hand to run through his hair. The words sent heat to spark through his core and into his chest. What was it with dominating blonde's being so pulled

to him? Whatever it was, he didn't want it to stop.

To: Clay ;(

as hot as that sounds, you said i was good, so i think i deserve a reward :[

The grey bubble appeared then faded quickly, disappearing for a few minutes, leaving George to his thoughts.

It was interesting, though, how allusive Clay was being. Something nagged his core that there was *something* he wasn't being told, something small or perhaps large that he was in the dark on. Maybe he was lying about majoring in something related to the arts and was actually a sports kid who happened to want to take a dance history class, so it would be far too obvious for him to show his face and be widely known as one of the better players? Or maybe he was lying about his looks now, stemming from some type of insecurity of his own build or height, creating a world in his head where he was tall and broad so he could feel wanted? Or maybe he knew George and wanted to get closer but didn't know how, or screwed up in some way and-

His phone buzzing four times snapped him out of his trance as he scrambled to his phone.

From: Clay ;(

[Attachment: 3 Images]

Took three with weird hands so you know it's me. I may be anonymous but I'm not a catfish.

George felt his mouth fall as he slowly tapped on the pictures, having to physically stop himself from letting himself zone out in a rush to imagine every conversation they'd had fall from *that* smirk.

The boy had on a black hoodie, and the first picture was a blurry shot of his chest, cutting off just past his heavy smirk, tan neck shaded by the darkness of his clothes and night. His hand was holding three fingers up, an obvious sign to show he hadn't found the pictures off of Google.

The second one was just as blurry in the same position, except his mouth was that much open, tongue stuck out and four fingers up in their place. George couldn't stop his wandering mind and thoughts at the sight of the picture, dark atmosphere in both his room and Clay's stroking that flame further.

The last photo showed the least, but sent George's brain into overload far faster than he had imagined.

Again, the room was dark, phone flash reflected in the mirror in front of him, a segment of his jawline and neck shown with the smallest bit of obscured caramel hair peeking past his ear. What truly got George about the third picture was the boy's proportions, his hands dwarfing his phone and body broad and strong. Syrup laced words from previous conversations flew by in his brain, mentions of his height and strength being far more accurate than he had intended.

His hands were still shaky as he moved to type, a few more thick swallows falling past his throat.

To: Clay ;(

now i have some sort of face to put to your texts

From: Clay ;(

I make you go speechless for a few minutes and that's all you can say?

From: Clay ;(

I told you from the start I wasn't a catfish, and I see you didn't take that too seriously

To: Clay ;(

i guess i don't understand why someone so confident otherwise would hide their looks

His typing bubble flickered in and out, something not quite right settling in the back of his throat. His head remained a cloud of thoughts, some full of Clay and his hands and dark room, others of Dream, and those two worlds began to mold together into something he couldn't quite explain.

Shaking his head, he snapped out of his thoughts. He needed to truly get over Dream before he could ever fully understand his feelings for Clay sooner rather than later.

From: Clay ;(

One day I'll tell you, yeah?

The soft response tugged on his heart, stomach alight with flutters, the gentle bat of butterfly wings flowing through every nerve on his body.

To: Clay ;(

i trust you

From: Clay ;(

I'm glad :)

George found himself smiling too, the scent of cedar and pine filling his nose. After a lot of fear, trusting was growing easier each day, and that was enough for him.

With the growing weather changes came rehearsals for their winter concert growing to fruition, group numbers being prime focuses of most of his classes, with the few private lessons he had also centering on those. Being a first year in their dance department, he hadn't expected much of anything other than his usual spacing since being a kid, always just left or right of center in the back line, occasionally needed for lifting girls in the rows in front of him, and perhaps a small turn combination solo during an end sequence, but that was just about it.

Which was why when he was pulled aside after class by the highest up ballet teacher and offered not only a duet, but a solo piece too, life seemed far too perfect to be at all true.

His partner was nothing short of a treat, bright and bubbly through their first rehearsal together, a stark contrast to the ball of tension and anxiety the shorter was throughout the entire thing. He worked double as hard as he needed to for simple steps, overthinking every turn and with no fluidity in his sharp lines.

The same held true for his first solo rehearsal. His body ached from the overexertion when it didn't need to be hurting. Things that should've been easy to him were taking up so much of his energy and strength because he *needed* them to be beyond good.

George had finally seen the opportunity to no longer be silver, and he refused to let that be taken from him, no matter how many pain-filled and restless nights he'd have to endure for who knows how long. He'd never let himself be anything but gold again, forever have the shiny, bright liquid dripping from his lips and fingertips while gracefully painting his way across the expanse of the entire stage until there wasn't an inch of space that didn't have his mark on it.

Karl, his dance partner, had been the one to initiate working outside of their privates together, and George had offered what had been *their* studio for use.

He didn't consider it theirs from the moment Dream had brought someone else in during their time. The motion of his hands on the boy's hips, and laughs rumbling over the gentle piano music would forever be burned into his brain.

He caught himself zoning out *again* during their work, mind a haze of Dream and the numbing chant of *perfect, perfect, perfect*, just as the taller brunette set a hand on his shoulder and spoke.

"George, dude. You look like hell, what's going on?"

He shook his head fast, sore and heavy body quickly moving to his prep into their piqué section, arms full of lead.

"Sorry, sorry, I'm fine we can start at--"

"-You're totally stiff right now, your arms look like they're about to fall off with how hard you're clenching," Karl interrupted, bringing a hand to rest on the shorter's arms in middle fifth. He waved the boy down from his prep and put both of his hands on George's shoulders.

"Listen, you're incredibly skilled, I've seen your work and I don't understand how this is your first

year here. But you've gotta relax, you're so tense all of your movements are stiff. Is there, like, something going on outside of dance?"

George fell silent, each word spelling out reality very clearly. Still, he wanted to *scream* that he *had* to be perfect. He just did. He couldn't let himself be the weak link, or the solo that everyone forgets the second they walk out of the theater, he *had* to be golden.

His yearn and drive for perfection was a never ending song, constantly playing through each class and minute of downtime filled with "I should be dancing" beating through his head. It was beyond frustrating that his one opportunity to pull himself up would all be in vain.

George thought about Dream, the perfect blonde who could never not be wrapped in gold if he tried. Someone silver could never keep someone like him. Maybe he never wanted to.

The fleeting thoughts and jumble of gestures was nothing short of agonizing, and he knew it was written all over his face.

"I'm gonna take you back to your dorm, okay?"

George was about to protest that they'd only been working for just under a half hour, that they *needed* to be over prepared for their next lesson, that he could force himself to relax and-

"No arguing, you need *sleep*, firstly, and then you need to find that love for this again, because I know you have it."

As Karl picked up their stuff, tidying up the room in the process, George mindlessly slipped his ballet shoes and slid on sneakers, brain completely elsewhere.

The love he'd had for dance was locked away, just out of reach since the fall had begun to melt away into a cold winter.

He hated the fact that he knew a small part of it was lost in the form of wavy blonde hair, sharp yellow eyes, and a pair of worn out tap shoes.

As they stepped out of the door and started to walk away, George took a glance back at the wood, only to find messy tufts of hair from behind, speed-walking in the opposite direction as the pair. His phone buzzed.

From: Clay ;(

How was your night?

To: Clay ;(

fine, i guess

Karl was busy with his own phone, goofily smiling down at whoever he was texting, so the brunette didn't feel bad for his own behavior. The pathway he was walking had become second nature to him at that point anyways.

From: Clay ;(

Is everything alright?

What was there to say?

George couldn't find the words, but it seemed he could stall a few more minutes as they had arrived at his dorm faster than he expected. He pressed his key and turned to unlock the door before his eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

"Did I tell you what dorm number I am?"

The brunette's face flushed instantly as he sputtered to say something, before George glanced inside and took notice of the black haired boy lazing on the couch with some shitty action movie playing in the back.

Slowly George nodded, dots slowly rolling together in his mind as he stared at the fluffy haired boy in front of him.

"Actually, I did, I-I just remembered I told you before we left. Sorry, my memory is awful sometimes."

Karl's face molded into a relieved smile, not seeming to have made the connection that the brunette picked up on what was happening. He gave a laugh before they said their goodbyes and George could file into his room.

At least Sapnap has good taste.

He didn't have the energy to shower or change just yet, as he bounced against the edge of his mattress, phone sliding from his hoodie pocket and back into his hand.

George confided in Clay quite often, and the blonde seemed to be responsive in the same direction too. It couldn't hurt to at least mention something.

To: Clay ;(

my dance partner told me i need to destress. and i mean its true, im tense and terrified of messing up but ive never been a soloist you know? like, im always the third in a trio of the back of group dances, ive never been the "love interest" in a duet, and i sure as hell have never had a solo.

To: Clay ;(

its all ive ever wanted, but i know im gonna fuck up because im just never seen as that. that life isnt for me, i guess

George swallowed as he waited for a response, hand twisting the fabric next to him.

From: Clay ;(

I had a friend like that once. I don't know why they never believed in themselves, because I could always see everything special about them.

There was another pause before another response came in.

From: Clay ;(

Can I tell you something?

To: Clay ;(

yes

George's heart leapt in his throat at the message, head light and full of clouds.

From: Clay ;(

You'll always be a soloist to me, and anyone who can't see how goddamn perfect you are on your own is fucking blind

Warm sugar danced around his mouth. He wondered what it would be like for Clay to tell him those gentle words up close.

To: Clay ;(

thank you, clay

To: Clay ;(

that means more than you'll ever know

From: Clay ;(

You deserve the world. I'd give it to you if I could.

The quiet stammers of his heart had become blood pumping in his ears as his delicate hands grazed

over his phone.

He let his eyes fondly run over his messages again. The small beats of something brewing in him had let go fully, covering him in sticky sweet syrup and sending him far past where he'd ever been before.

If Clay found a way to give him the world, he'd come back with each and every star to give right back.

Chapter End Notes

[twitter](#)

<3

apple pie

Chapter Summary

George is left alone to his dorm, and becomes a little too in over his head.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The third week in November came far faster than George had wanted or expected it to, rehearsals dragging out longer as more and more anxiety and tension built up with it. Needless to say, Thanksgiving break was a much needed destressing period, aside from the few solo and duet rehearsals he still had being his only distraction from total relaxation.

A lot of people had gone home, staying with family for the week and taking a vacation from cramped dorms and the stressful atmosphere that came with them. Sapnap was among these people, to George's dismay, leaving him alone with only his thoughts and the dim mumbles of chatter he'd occasionally hear just outside his walls, random students walking in pairs or groups to their own rooms.

Well, alone physically, at least. It seemed like he was constantly glued to his phone screen texting more than he had ever before. He was honestly shocked that Clay hadn't gone home to at least visit his mom, and when he brought it up with the boy, he simply said that they never really did much for the superficial holiday and that he'd rather stay and work on things for finals.

He talked to Sapnap, too, random calls and texts of catching up, or random pictures of the taller with his cousins or in his room with lazy captions. He thoroughly enjoyed those conversations, missing his roommate and the lively energy bouncing off his walls, although he had noticed that his friend's yearning to come back seemed to go beyond just their shitty dorm and the dancer (something George decided would be talked about another time, on Sapnap's terms).

But, despite the lack of a physical body in his dorm, he felt at home with the presence of Clay almost always there. The bitter metallic taste of Dream seemed to fade with each passing day, though George knew deep down that the only reason for this had been that the open studios were having brief remodels done over the break and the pair couldn't see each other even if they wanted to.

That didn't quite matter, though, as the brunet was too focused on his mystery boy always only a few texts away to really care.

He was on their couch, legs sprawled haphazardly with a big hoodie and blanket giving him all the warmth he could ever desire, as his soft grin continued to pull at his cheeks, thumbs flying across his keyboard with each new response.

From: Clay ;(

All I'm saying is that hypothetically my hoodie would be warmer than the one you're wearing

To: Clay ;(

your reasoning is flawed i need you to reiterate

From: Clay ;(

Well it's coming from off my body, and I've been told I'm like a human furnace, so basically I'm probably hotter than you are and thus would make you more warm

George snorted at the dumb comment. They'd been running in circles for a while with their flirting for the past ten minutes, acting like sickly sweet pining highschoolers more than anything else. The brunet would be lying if he said his cheeks weren't stained a dusty pink.

To: Clay ;(

did you just say youre hotter than me D:

From: Clay ;(

NO NO

From: Clay ;(

Temperature wise, I mean. No one could ever be as hot as you, promise.

George's stomach did a few whirls at the comment. Despite the frequency of the blonde's compliments and praises, he'd never get over how they made him feel. The whirlwind of warmth and sugar filling all of his senses after each line was something he'd never get tired of.

To: Clay ;(

how would i even get your hoodie mr mystery?

From: Clay ;(

Simple. I'd leave it outside your dorm :)

He let his heart stutter at that. Sharing clothes had always been one of his favorite and closest held pieces of his relationships in the past, the ability to always have a piece of your partner on you, knowing something that was previously on their body was also hugging your skin, too. If he tried hard enough, he could always feel his person's arms around them while wearing their clothes. As

domestic and small of a thing, it always meant a lot to George, a symbol of love and affection that didn't need broad words or extravagance. Simply the epitome of someone's presence and being.

He wondered what Clay would smell like, what cologne does he use? Is he a sweet sugar or vanilla, or something akin to a forest, deep and strong? Would it stay feeling like Clay for a long time or fade away quickly after a few washes?

Lost in his own thoughts, head full of scenarios of the faceless blonde and any one of his hoodies draping his body in a comforting heat, his responses stilled for a minute.

To: Clay ;(

maybe, what if someone sees you

From: Clay ;(

Let them, I want them to see

George let the heels of his hands dig into his eyes, shaking his head at the notion. The comments only grew more frequent as they talked more, which only added to his flips and twists in his chest. A part of him ached at the idea that he was just a pretty face to Clay, someone he never intended on meeting and just to use as a tester. He tried to push away his thoughts as best he could as he remembered what he had been wanting to ask for some time.

To: Clay ;(

that reminds me, do you think you'd want to come to my winter performance? :]

To: Clay ;(

[Attachment: 1 Image]

here's the info

George had envisioned the scene over and over again in his head, walking out after making his numbers looks effortless and with the stride of only someone of the utmost prestige and worth, glittering with a yellow shine, only to run into the arms of a tall broad stranger who had only grown more infatuated as the brunet performed. He yearned to see the perfect mystery of a person he was with a proud and sincere smile on his face against the dark navy of the starlit sky, all for him to see and to love.

He really needed to get over his incredibly dense and full feelings.

Clay typed and retyped and retyped for what seemed like an eternity, heart thumping rapidly against his chest with much more anxiety than anything else. His already jumpy hands were itching to say something to cover the earnest lacing his words, when a long grey bubble appeared on his

screen.

From: Clay ;(

George you know I want to more than anything. I'd love to see you perform, I really would, but I don't think that I can this time.

George's stomach that was previously doing lighthearted flips and turns, a complicated dance of hope had fallen into a knot of conflict and fear. Previous spins had reminded him of his duet, the delicate turn sequence in the middle as a display of gentle grace and affection, the slight brushes of hand to represent tentative teen love. Now, he felt like he was falling out of every pirouette, all seconds spiraling into a deep pit of chaos and dizziness, fatigue and fear replacing the soft comments from before.

There very well *could* be a reason for Clay's flakiness, was what the dancer was trying to tell himself. The other half of him was screaming that he needed to get a grip and realize he was only a way to pass the time, and nothing more. A fun little break from whatever personal stress the blonde had only to be dipped for something of worth.

To: Clay ;(

do you mind if i ask why?

From: Clay ;(

It's complicated

Frustration bubbled to the top of his chest, face tensing at the notion of complicated emotions and feelings.

Everything related to him was complicated, each new person who tried to prove that wrong would inevitably fail. George hadn't had the best of past partners, many a empty bed after secret nights to never be heard of again, lots of heartbreak and broken trust, but he had put it all aside to focus on the one thing that he wouldn't let break him, his way out of the life he had been living and onto the one he'd always dreamed of.

New York brought him the hope that he wouldn't have to feel the anguish he once had, a newfound comfort in aggressive tap sounds and a golden presence had given his closed off self hope that perhaps it wouldn't have to be just him and his ballet flats.

He shouldn't have let himself fall, shouldn't have let himself be seen. George had always been an expert at closing himself off and keeping tall and impenetrable walls up and around him for protections. The few who'd seen past them before, broken or climbed the barriers around him had only left him in a deep rubble, so why did he think Dream was different? Why did he let himself think that *Clay* would be different, too?

A buzzed snapped his tornado of thoughts back to his phone.

From: Clay ;(

You have to believe me when I say it's not you. I'm just anxious is all

To: Clay ;(

i guess i cant shake the feeling that you dont want to meet me haha

From: Clay ;(

No, no not at all it's just me, okay? I promise

From: Clay ;(

I want to meet you more than anything else in the world

George stared at the phone in his hand, a swirling storm of emotions still barreling through him. He let himself take a breath in and lean his head against the armrest of the couch, staring upwards at the ceiling. He hated the feeling of falling, the inevitable plunge into icy cold water that could lead to the ultimate despair and ache.

He glanced at the time on his phone, idly thinking to himself he should eat. It was getting to be late afternoon anyways, dwelling on complex feelings could be put off to later. George had always been great at doing so.

His phone was ringing absurdly loud against his bedside table, effectively jolting him awake from his blurry haze. George groaned at the notion of being awake as he snatched his phone from its place on the charger to pull close to his face.

Of course it's Sapnap, who else would call me at four in the fucking morning.

Before he hit the answer button, he let his mushy brain readjust to reality, as the events of his dream had come crashing back onto him. He couldn't make out faces or much from his sight, but he could still feel the warmth and sweet love embracing him wholly. Strong arms in hazy dark fabric surrounded by gold and silver clouds, soft rumbles against his back and heat encasing his being. He was gonna kill Sapnap for waking him up from the euphoric dream.

He hadn't texted Clay the rest of the day, opting for naps and food, then to fall asleep properly after eating an actual meal for dinner. The fact that the blonde was appearing in his dreams was only

frustrating him more, never seeming able to let go of the obnoxious butterflies despite his dire attempts.

He answered the call, annoying ringtone ceasing as he pressed the phone to his ear.

“Why the hell are you calling me this early?” George grumbled out, still barely conscious. If he tried hard enough he could still reach out and touch the nape of a pale blonde’s neck, affection flooding his blood.

“It’s break, I assumed you’d be up at these hours,” Sapnap replied, voice bright and chipper as if he hadn’t been sleeping. George let himself sit up, a spare pillow being pulled into his lap to have something to hold onto.

“Why would I be up? I’m not one to be constantly social,”

“Dude, the dorm is empty. And has been for almost a week now.”

George rubbed his eye again, the morning winter air biting through his windows and causing a slight chill. It was far too early to try and understand what his friend was implying. He stayed silent for a few more seconds, line falling dead as Sapnap groaned.

“You’re not serious are you?”

George furrowed his eyebrows and blinked a few times, taking in a breath before getting cut off from speaking a word.

“You haven’t had anyone over?”

The pieces clicked in the brunet’s head as he let his eyes grow wide.

“ *Sapnap!* ”

Laughs rang through the other end of the line as his own cheeks grew scarlet at the insinuation. It wasn’t like either of them were afraid of talking about people of their interest, now at least, but George being more of a private person had never been one to be able to laugh off vulgar comments.

In the beginning, his roommate didn’t quite know what to say or how to approach potential suitor conversation with George, but as time progressed, comments and questions grew more frequent and more raunchy, too. The explicit ones still made the dancer hiss, though.

“What? You can’t blame me for asking. Plus you’ve been nothing but a ball of stress, I’d assume you’d want to, y’know, let some of that out at some point.”

More snickers fell from the opposite side of the line, no malice attached to them, as George sputtered some sort of response.

“For the record I am very much *calm* , thank you, and even if I *was* I don’t see how getting laid would do anything but add more problems.”

“Yeah, frantically running through routines past midnight in your room is ‘not stressed’. Go get some guy to pull the stick out of your ass and shove something else-”

“Did you *really* call me to talk to me about my sex life?” George interrupted, wanting to hear literally anything other than the ending half of the sentence his friend was attempting to laugh out.

“No, no, I did have a reason,” The boy responded, laughing subsiding.

“Shoot, then.”

“I, uh, wanted to come to your dance show thing.”

He stumbled over the words, something akin to anxiety falling from his lips. A knowing smile pulled at the dimples of the brunette, hand subconsciously rubbing over his pillow.

“And you decided this at four am?”

“Uh, well,” Sapnap trailed off, stuttering to find an explanation, before settling on something. “I had just been thinking about it, with you being stressed ‘n all, so I wanted to tell you I’m gonna go.”

George hummed, vivid image of a curly haired brunette sputtering to explain how he knew his dorm number still engraved in his head. He’d let Sapnap come to him about that one.

“I’m glad, then.”

The line fell silent, a comforting peace overtaking the pair. George could tell his friend wanted to say something, wanted to spill his guts and get the kindness and help he needed, but just couldn’t reach out. He truly felt for the boy, heart wishing he could do more. A part of him remembered being in Sapnap’s position, the feeling of aimlessly exploring newfound feelings.

“I should get to sleep. Have to wake up early for pictures before dinner,” Sapnap interrupted, voice more timid than it had been before.

“It’s already Thursday? Crazy.”

“I’ll text you pictures of me looking snazzy, you just won’t be able to resist me.”

George rolled his eyes at the comment, a sigh coming out along with it.

“Sure, if it’ll help you sleep keep thinking that.”

A soft laugh came from both of the pair, rumbles through the top of the brunette’s chest being felt up to his cheeks.

“Well, goodnight, sleep well idiot,” George mumbled, letting himself slide back to his previous spot beneath his blankets.

“Goodnight, asshole.”

The line fell dead just after, and George immediately put the phone back in it’s rightful place on his nightstand and plugged in before letting his head hit his pillows, sleep beckoning him once again.

Sapnap had always been a rock, something to guide him and keep him grounded in times of stress and excess anxiety. As his eyes closed he let himself think back on the times the brunette had comforted him, or even just bought him food as a means of helping him cope. He was a good friend, better than George could really ask for.

Few thoughts other than hazes of fuzzy scenarios and memories flew through the brunette’s brain as he let his drowsiness swallow him whole.

He’d silently hoped he could go back to the euphoria of warmth and love he had been enclosed in

from before.

The day was uneventful and almost completely silent. Halls that usually had some sort of sound passing through them in the form of students had completely disappeared. The lack of sound was almost deafening to the brunet, previously comforting and fun had shifted into something sad and empty. Despite never having celebrated the holiday prior, a part of him felt bitter that he was alone in his empty dorm on a day to show care and thanks to loved ones.

George shut himself up in his room, napping through mid morning and wandering his tiny living space through the afternoon. He never usually felt upset about small things like holidays spent alone, the odd Valentine's day where he felt more alone than usual being an exception. It was a strange feeling, a pit in his stomach he couldn't seem to get rid of. He hated it, the inability to push away the dwelling feelings.

He hadn't texted Clay either, and he assumed that was a part of it as well.

George felt shitty for dropping off the conversations, but swirling and conflicted feelings only seemed to make his issues that much more heightened compared to anything else. Fear and confusion soared through his body as he tried to process anything relating to the mystery boy and each thing surrounding him. He second guessed everything he had ever thought or said, the wonderful bliss he had achieved over the week through their constant texts from clear, airy mornings to the deep pits of night. Could he really go that long to fake everything just to use the dancer as a tester? A pawn in his game to find a more suitable king to put at his side?

A loud knock took him from his trance, sturdy hand against wood.

Waves of confusion washed over the brunette as he hesitantly moved to the dorm's main door. He stood in front of it, intense fear spreading through him like wildfire at what or who might be behind it.

George took out his phone to keep in hand in case of any danger as his other hand grazed the cool metal door handle. It took a minute of deliberating before he took a deep breath and swung it open, only to be met with an empty hall.

His eyebrows furrowed glancing around at the barren walls before looking down and letting out a small gasp.

A slice of what he presumed to be apple pie on a paper plate lay at his feet, next to a bundle of dark navy fabric and an index card. George knelt down to take the paper into his hands and flip it over to see curvy handwriting.

No one should spend Thanksgiving without pie :) and a little something extra too

-C

George's heart got caught in his throat as burning heat flew through his veins. Turning over the card in his hand he let his eyes wander over the deep fabric, a bright smile settling on his face as his eyes lit up. He tentatively picked up the plate and thick material as he walked back inside, doing a small onceover of the hall again to even catch a glimpse of his mystery boy, to no avail.

One day

Setting the plate down onto the small dinner table they had, he held the clothing up only to gawk at the size of it.

Holy shit this guy is huge.

He'd deny that his hands were shaking as he pulled the still warm material over him, the instant smell of cologne hitting his nose combined with something he couldn't quite place. George's knees fell weak as he watched the fabric swallow him whole.

Clay was right, he *was* warmer.

Nothing could quite capture what he was feeling, a mix of attraction and hope wrapped into a dense ball and coiling deep within him. Being the center of someone's attention was something he thought only capable within the confines of his mind, locked behind dreams of possession and love, but as he held the piece of clothing in his hands, a deep symbol of genuine care, he let himself dream.

A dopey smile stayed glued to his face at the gifts left for him as he rushed to take out his phone.

To: Clay ;(

how did you know i liked apple pie?

From: Clay ;(

Lucky guess :)

George took his food and note into his room, setting the two items onto his bed before haphazardly taking a mirror picture of himself drowning in the navy blue fabric, sending the first one he took. He liked the simple nature of it, something just enough to show how much he loved it without giving too much away.

To: Clay ;(

[Attachment: 1 Image]

in all fairness, you're right, it is warmer

From: Clay ;(

You're so pretty

George's throat closed, instantly drying as his head spun, mind moving far faster for his mouth or hands to type. Before he could say anything, another text flew in.

From: Clay ;(

And also, I wanted to tell you something

To: Clay ;(

oh??

George sat on baited breath.

From: Clay ;(

I worked things out and I can come see your performance :)

The smile already covering his face grew that much wider as he frantically moved to respond. The excitement he felt at the small sentence was perhaps a bit much, but he truly couldn't bring himself to care as the scenarios from the day earlier came flooding back at a rapid pace.

To: Clay ;(

REALLY? oh my god yes

From: Clay ;(

I can't wait to see you

George picked up the plate of pie next to him, setting it in his lap as he let himself process the idea of *Clay* wanting to watch him *dance* , watch him partake in something so personal and meaningful to him in all its beautiful glory, just for him. He'd see him paint the stage in shades of the sun and be able to say *he* was the one he was there for. A deep part of him wanted Dream to see the pair together, see what he had lost in the process of leading him down a road that led to heartbreak.

To: Clay ;(

i can't wait to see you too

His smile didn't fade as he let his mind wander back to the post-show dreams of love and hope, the idea that something more, something better, was coming. Would Clay bring him flowers? Would he want to meet Sapnap? Would he remember his favorite flower? Would Dream be jealous? Would Clay be *possessive* ? Would-

Just as he was taking the first bite of pie, a thought lingered into the back of his mind.

I never told Clay what dorm I'm in, have I?

He shook his head setting his fork down onto the plate before moving to eat nonetheless.

I must've, we've talked endlessly these past days.

Chapter End Notes

[twitter](#)

fountain of gold

Chapter Summary

George finally paints a stage with gold, and a certain someone gets to watch it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Anxious couldn't truly begin to describe the feeling exploding throughout him as he walked into the back door of the theatre, a concrete hall leading to where he and the other dancers' dressing room would be.

George had remained continuously stressed as tech week had barrelled on, although, for once it hadn't been due to the continuous confusion in his personal life. Ironically, Clay had been the only thing keeping the brunet sane amongst the madness that was a dressing room during dress rehearsals. The mystery boy had remained a constant light in the dancer's light, being his sense of reality and grounding when he wasn't working his ass off under hot stage lights to make incredibly brutal steps look effortless.

Weeks of intense work and stress-filled nights had led all to *this*. This performance of which he knew agents would be scouting dancers in the middle rows of the audience, scrutinizing and picking apart every person who left their mark on that stage was what he had been itching for for what had truly been years.

Walking in, he saw the flurry of hairspray, people stretching overtop the barres and against walls, and-

The person that had somehow managed to avoid him all week.

George's mind had been freed of Dream for a while, occasional thoughts immediately pushed away due to a new text from Clay or the need to rehearse more for the show, and he had also managed to not see him throughout the sea of insanity tech week usually was and the sheer number of dancers needing to be in the theatre at one time.

Surrounded by girls who shouldn't have been in their dressing room, and other boys as well, was Dream who had confliction in his eyes and something George couldn't seem to place. Taking another few seconds to look at the golden boy, he could see the bright smiles on the other dancer's faces, and had come to the conclusion he was with people in one of his group numbers. But George could see the look in quite a few of their eyes, the gentle want for the blonde's attention for him to *just* look their way and give a chance to meet and create something beautiful.

Dream's own couldn't stop pouring into George, who promptly looked away and made a beeline towards Karl who had already gotten mostly ready.

"D'you wanna run anything before places?" The brunet spoke, taming his fluffy mess of hair as George had begun taking off his warm-ups.

“Yeah, I think just the lifts that come out of the turn section, otherwise we’re really solid.”

His eyes were narrowed in on a piece of tile on the floor as he continued to get ready, running, and running, and re-running his pieces in his head, correcting each possible flaw to perfection only to scrutinize himself more. He hadn’t realized he’d zoned out until the tall boy next to him had continued to repeat his name.

“George, *George* -”

He’s gonna tell me how stressed I am, right?

“Sorry, sorry I just-”

“-You’ve been, like, way calmer than I expected you to be,” Karl continued, letting George be taken aback a bit and furrow his eyebrows in confusion. *Less* stressed? The brunet couldn’t even let himself *fathom* thinking about anything other than ballet for sixty seconds, and yet he was less stressed than what his dance partner had imagined him to be?

“What?” He sputtered, letting the hoodie he had taken off pull towards his chest.

“You were practically shaking on the first day, dude, I’m just shocked you’re not literally pissing yourself right now.”

A soft laugh followed the words, and before he could answer the curly-haired boy had continued his sentiment.

“You, like, got someone to relieve your stress or something?”

“ *Karl!* ”

More laughter came from him, as George couldn’t help the smile pulling at his lips as he shook his head. What was it with people assuming he needed to get laid when he was stressed and had when he wasn’t?

“I’m just saying, you’ve been so much looser recently, even in your performance, it feels like you found your love again.”

He paused as George was about to retort that none of that had to do with having a significant other before he was again interjected.

“And you’ve been glued to your phone, smiling like an idiot. And there’s no way that hoodie is yours.”

Pink flooded his cheeks as he moved to shove said hoodie in his arms into his dance bag on the counter.

“ *No* , I *don’t* have a boyfriend, I’ve just been, enjoying talking to someone.”

Karl’s smile grew as he moved to pull on a blazer for a jazz number he had early on in the show.

“Well enjoy it all you’d like, because when you’ve been dancing recently you actually look like you *love* it.”

Karl squeezed his shoulder and moved over to a group wearing the same white jacket that he had, presumably to run through their number, and George was left with the true meaning behind his words.

He let himself stare in the mirror, looking at the same person he'd grown used to staring at in tall, full-length, mirrors for years. But he *wasn't* the same, and it threw him for such an intense loop it had felt surreal. His skin was full of color, warm tones of pink helped brighten it, the smile plastered on his face wasn't one of force but yet one he had *chosen* to place there himself, his eyes were *bright*, his arms looked strong and not shaky, *he* looked strong, as if he knew who he was and what he was destined to accomplish and didn't care who would bring him down because he knew he'd be able to prove them wrong with thirty seconds, an empty stage, and a pair of ballet shoes.

He looked golden. He *was* golden.

George glanced down at his phone that had just vibrated against the deep fabric of his hoodie and read the contact name from where he was rooted in his spot.

Clay had been the one to ease him back into reality when he was under extreme pressure, and that help and the gentleness the boy had expressed to him had helped George rediscover his *love*, his *passion*, and his *desire* to continue performing for and striving to prove his own excellence he held at his core.

Shaking his head, he picked up his phone and glanced at the time, before hearing their half-hour call over the intercom in the room. He mentally cycled through the order of his numbers and made a note to lay out his costumes in order before opening his messages.

From: Clay ;(

I'm really excited to see you tonight :)

To: Clay ;(

i really hope you like the show, i know sometimes dance can be boring unless you're super into it

From: Clay ;(

It's you, how could I not be into it?

George let out a heavy sigh, the soft smile still resting on his face with an extra sense of ease to it. It was something about Clay's words that never ceased to make his chest tighten and the anxiety pulling at his skin shake away.

To: Clay ;(

you're sweet :]

To: Clay ;(

i need to start getting changed, lmk when you get here, it should be pretty easy to figure out seating

With a click of his phone, the brunet briskly walked to the opposite end of the room and picked off the flared leggings he had forgotten to take home with him the night before, sliding the hangers and scanning each of the tags to find the 'GEORGE' written in bold sharpie. When he had pulled the item off the rack he turned back to get his other pieces and change, before he caught a dirty blonde staring in the corner of his eye. George let himself freeze, not directly turning his head, but continuing to glance in his peripheral vision. His head tilted down as he felt green eyes bore into him, eating him up without words.

Guilt. That was what he saw in the boy's eyes before. Pulling his head up he continued moving, without giving a second to glance back.

The weight of the world rest on his pale shoulders as he stood on the expansive stage in pitch black lighting, and he could feel his own breath make his upper body quake.

His eyes full of silver burned when bright lights with heat radiating off each inch had fallen onto him. Soft piano beats thumped through his core, as he continued to drip metal, easing its way off of his body as he had ached for it too since he was young.

Circles of lights drenched him as his arms moved, each one tearing a new hoe through the expanse of glittering grey he had been confined to. Confined to since childhood where he had been told that his natural path, his fate, even, lay in a garden with firm metal gates enclosing it, confining him into a box he had desperately wished to break free from. The bleak grey roses made of iron and inferiority made up each item in his line of sight, clouds covering where he had been told he'd forever stay. Rusty nails kept the fence in its place, delicate hands not yet calloused enough, not yet *wounded* enough to gain a grasp and rip open his prison.

Each movement, each step filled with grace and poise had strayed him further down the path of bright clarity, glimmers of something so blinding just aching to pierce out from under his skin continuously showing their waves. Mirrors cascading down his figuring reflecting what that of the world surrounding him had desired to see, not what he truly had been from deep at his core. It was idyllic, it was what he'd been *forced* to be, forced to *live* as.

Time ticked on, once delicate hands stained with rust, eroding away his exterior and everything he had spent so long polishing to look perfect, to be a constant bell pinging in time with each shout of the guards of his harden.

It was under bright light, *blinding* lights of pure victory, and sheer sunshine where the erosion, the *rust* had finally begun to chip away from his body.

This was meant to be his breaking, meant to be where he would fall and his limbs made of iron oxide turning to nothing more than dust against a heavy black, fading the sliver of a bell he once was out of existence, the garden beneath his feet breaking too.

But it didn't.

The pewter shell he'd been locked in wasn't fading. No, it was chipping. Chipping away like that of thick paint on an old wall exposing what was truly there, what was truly underneath the forced exterior he'd been living in for longer than he could remember. Each chunk fell off of him, sliding

off of his limbs through each turn as light broke through and auspicious languidity seeped out in buckets onto the floor.

A golden figure had taken over the stage as the rusted walls broke, the garden he'd been locked in for over two decades falling beneath his feet and being replaced with nothing short of paradise. Fountains of shining ink drenched him, replacing the silver that had been on him before and covering the true beauty underneath, the true beauty he'd been trying to show through every single movement and turn he could.

Every inch of the black material below him was covered with radiance, expertly layered and executed. The marks left there through every step, music growing with intensity only to fall again, would forever be etched into where the silver-clad garden had once been, empty black taunting him before, and now being efficiently conquered.

Four al la seconds into a triple pirouette, landing in fourth.

His arms reached, reaching towards a cloudless sky, before falling with all the eloquence and grace of a daisy.

George's chest was heaving as an uproar of applause pounded through his ears. Unbeknownst to those watching, another shine was covering the boy just over deep chocolate eyes.

He was everything he'd wanted to be, he had shown his immense skill, he had used the work he'd been putting in for decades, he had painted a stage with nothing but his body, he was *gracious*, he was *powerful*, he was *skilled*, he was-

George was golden.

George walked off in the blackout with his head held high and his eyes full of clear symbols of every piece of himself he gave to performing coming right back to him.

Not even a blonde tuft of hair in the wings could distract him from the weight of the emotion he had produced.

The rest of the performance George had felt on-air, as his solo was the first thing he did, and it truly gave him wings of gold to fly on throughout the rest. Karl and his duet was also the best they had ever performed the piece, emotion and genuine care for the art form leaking from every movement.

George's last group number had been the closer, a lovely tribute piece from the highest level ballet class in the conservatory, however, as the brunet's luck would have it, the number just before, of course, was a bright blonde's tap solo.

It was hard not to let himself become entranced with the dancer, each hit and turn done so eloquently for an art form that was the opposite of graceful was nothing short of astounding. Intense sounds thumping across the stage truly amazing him, and the audience it seemed, and the *expressions* the boy sold the performance as he blatantly stole the hearts and love from each audience member.

The brilliant smile had almost let George escape into a world where the pair *did* get their happy

ending. Where they had become the earth-shattering pair he knew they were capable of.

The last symphony of sounds played with the blaring trumpet before a roaring crowd produced cheers and claps before a sharp blackout.

Shaking his head George made his way on stage, his now golden exterior matching that of the blonde who had mixed his own shine with that left before him on the stage.

When the curtain had finally closed, an entire conservatory of skill having given their metaphorical thanks to an audience of people who had dedicated two and a half hours of their night to their art, the dressing room was full of vibrant chatter and a flurry of clothes and makeup wipes.

“ *George!* ” Karl said, running over to their corner of counter space as he frantically started to change. “I’ve literally heard your name in passing more times than I can count, your solo was fucking astonishing!”

The smile burned into his face pulled at him harder than before, a sheepish laugh ringing out from his chest as he started to remove his costume pieces and put them into assorted piles.

“Thank you, your lead in the contemporary number was heart-wrenching. You’re an incredible actor, honestly.”

“Don’t shift this to be about *me*, idiot!”

The pair laughed together at that, as the shorter moved to open his phone to numerous texts from Clay.

From: Clay ;(

Break a leg <3

From: Clay ;(

Holy shit

From: Clay ;(

You’re literally fucking incredible oh my god

From: Clay ;(

I cannot even find words to express how beautiful of a dancer you are

From: Clay ;(

I didn’t want to use my phone except during intermission, and I felt it better to express the sentiment to you in person. I’m still not over your solo

From: Clay ;(

Meet me at the front, by the fountain, but wait until everyone leaves, yeah?

George quirked an eyebrow at that, smirk dancing on his lips.

To: Clay ;(

why, so you can kidnap me?

From: Clay ;(

You're so dumb

From: Clay ;(

It's more peaceful when no one else is around

George's chest was reeling as the butterflies violently flapped their wings inside of him. He felt more anxious than he had when he was first going on *stage* ,

To: Clay ;(

of course, ill cya there :)

George glanced at himself in the small dressing room mirror. It felt like forever ago since he'd had a smile glued on his face with such genuine joy and love.

George had opted to wait in the lobby of the theatre, duffle bag in hand as the other performers and such filed out in groups, keeping his eyes open for a tall blonde with a warm smile. It was freezing outside, December in New York really was no joke, and the brunet could almost see the specks of snow threatening to fall against the air.

He'd been checking his phone continuously for the past twenty minutes, each time feeling a sinking pull on his heart when nothing was there. The lobby was silent, at that point, and George took a sigh as he looked around the empty room.

He'd been begging the universe for just *one* happy ending.

With a sigh, he pushed open one of the wide doors and let his eyes dart around the plaza. He couldn't see anyone.

Gingerly, he walked down the steps and made his way towards the large beautifully lit fountain by the center of the complex, tall grey pillars standing proud to his right and left as he left the covering's safety from abrasive weather.

He could make out a figure, tall and in heavy clothing, and suddenly his heart was in his throat and for the first time that night his legs felt *weak* as if they were made of glass, the soreness in his body had caught up to him as the person who he'd given *everything* to was practically right in front of him-

The man turned around, and George's face soured instantly.

With a cold turn, he looked around to see if anyone else was nearby, crossing his arms.

"What're *you* doing here?" He asked, refusing to make eye contact with Dream as his heart kept sinking lower and lower in his chest at the lack of any other people by him.

"I could ask you the same thing, couldn't I?"

George rolled his eyes, having to suppress a groan at the *stupid* response.

"*I'm* about to meet someone who came tonight, so if you'll *excuse* me I'm gonna,"

The sentence faded off as George had realized the entire plaza was empty. There was no sign of life aside from the two breathing bodies under a large fountain and the static lights continuing their obnoxious orange glow.

His eyes stung as he refused to turn back to the blonde, an entire ocean hitting him at once that once again, *George* wasn't wanted. Clay had been nothing more than sweet words and a fake pass time, who had never wanted anything more than that. Gone into a wisp of smoke and dust, faded dreams and memories they hadn't made yet.

The golden purity he had finally become was fading away into grey again.

It took every ounce of strength the brunet had to keep the tsunami of emotions and sobs from pouring over in front of *Dream*, the guy who had *fucked* him over so bad and was *still* the one who was winning.

George wanted to rub it in the bastard's face that he was *happy*, that he had missed his opportunity because the sweetest most tender person had already snatched the brunet up while he could.

He knew he was shaking. He knew he looked fragile. He tried everything in his fucking power to suppress it.

"George, I-"

"-No, *fuck* you, Dream."

He couldn't bear to look behind him. With every ounce of courage he had, a hand rubbed his frost-bitten face in an attempt to rub away the warm tears almost spilling over, and started to walk away.

"I'm going home. I-I don't even know *why* you're here, but I'm leaving, so don't even fucking *try* _."

“ *George*, please just, wait-”

A hand gripped his shoulder, and the brunet threw it off of him and turned around.

Guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty.

“I’m *done* waiting, Dream! You’ve done enough, now let me-”

“ *I think you deserve to know my name!* ”

George stopped, taking a moment to look into the bright yellow eyes in front of him. Dream looked fragile. For the first time, the golden, bright, *exuberant* tapper looked like he was seconds away from breaking down. His hands were shaking, his eyes were filled with alarm and desperation, and every part of him was *screaming* to stay. With caution, George swallowed, voice quiet.

“What’s your name, then, Dream?”

The blonde looked away, back towards the theatre, then slowly towards the brunet. Dream would blame it on the lighting, but you could see a gloss over the expanse of his eyes. After a deep breath, the tall boy spoke slowly.

“Clay.”

Oh.

“I’m Clay Adams.”

Oh.

George’s mouth was dry, and every part of him felt like dry heaving against the nearest trash can.

Everything he had confessed to Clay, every word of sentiment and the truest pieces of himself he’d never dare show the world, were shown to *Dream*? The late-night conversations, the intimate words he’d be embarrassed if anyone else were to even *see* them, the tears, the insecurity, the emotions, the *real* George, not just the one he had put out during dance.

The desire to be gold, the ache to rip the deep-rooted silver off of his skin and replace it with something greater, with something more. His iron rose led garden with thorns on each turn, the pain falling out of love with his passion due to stress had caused him, his *ache* for someone to *love* him, for someone to *care* .

Dream had been the one to see it. To see it all.

Goodnight sweetheart

No reason. Just stay safe

I’m just worried about you okay?

I care about you, George. You don’t deserve whatever’s happened to you.

You can keep talking to me. I wanna know who I have to give a nice punch to the gut when I see them

You’ll always be a soloist to me, and anyone who can’t see how goddamn perfect you are on your own is fucking blind

You deserve the world. I'd give it to you if I could.

A whispered "what?" was all the boy could manage to get out.

"I- It's a really long story."

George should want to punch him. Want to scream and throw a tantrum and cry and never look the blonde's way ever again.

But he couldn't. Not after he'd trusted him with the deepest held emotions he never dared show.

He nodded his head, and the blonde was off like a rocket.

"I saw you in class, and- and you were *so* goddamn cute even through a fucking computer screen, and I just thought that, y'know it'd be fun to have someone to talk through that boring ass class, and you *instantly* grabbed my attention, and were just, the best right off the bat."

The flustered nature of the blonde was something he had never seen from him before, the intensity and desire to say the right thing was ever-present in each syllable.

"And so then when you walked into the studio that night, I was just, *frozen*, I didn't know what to do because 'hey here's this gorgeous ballet dancer I was flirting with earlier, and so when you asked for my name I was a *fucking idiot*, and just blurted out an old nickname from high school."

George's face kept a frustrated tone as he snorted at that.

Who the hell nickname's someone 'Dream'?

Clay almost looked relieved at even the semblance of humor in the air, and let out a breathy laugh of his own, before continuing.

"I was gonna tell you on Halloween."

George winced at the mention, causing a visual pain in the blonde's face.

"But- But I was just, a huge idiot and had no clue how to even start to explain. Then drunk Sapnap came over and I just- I panicked and dipped."

The memories of the sad night had washed over him again, and nausea fell across too as he opened his mouth to speak.

"But, the guy he-"

"The *guy* I was talking about *you* to."

The brunet felt his stomach drop. He had been mad at Dream over something he had *assumed*

George had never wanted to kick himself harder than in that very moment with a frightened and concerned blonde in front of him in front of a theatre in the middle of winter.

"He's an old friend who has a partner, and I needed their advice on how- how to tell you. Then he asked me to help him with a lift for his trio, and we were just goofing off when you walked in. I-I felt so awful, George, I really did."

The events replayed like a movie as the blonde kept talking, the anger of him being lied to was seeping away and down the drain as he had kept talking.

“But why did you keep lying, Clay?”

The name felt odd falling off of his tongue, yet so, so incredibly right.

“I didn’t want to lose you,” He managed to whisper out, barely heard over the ambiance of the world. The tenderness, the *care* in the tall boy’s voice made every part of the brunet’s body fall weak. His desire to be wanted was finally, *finally*, being filled.

“You never wanted to speak with ‘Dream’ again, you made that very clear, and it was really deserved. How could I tell you the guy who’d been nothing but a dick to you was also the one who was calling you sweetheart and telling you how much he wanted to hold you to make everything bad go away?”

George fell silent, eyes staring holes into the ground beneath him, as he felt Clay’s own piercing into him, staring with such intensity it almost shattered him. A shaky hand reached out to cup his cheek, forcing his eyeline up.

“I meant everything I said, sweetheart. I-I really did.”

The phrase sent him reeling, eyes dilating wide as he couldn’t find the words to explain what he needed to.

Another pause came over them, as Clay’s eyes fell gentler, a kind atmosphere setting over the pair.

“You- You have every right to push me away right now, to- to shove me and yell at me, and call me awful things because you don’t deserve *any* of the hurt you’ve been through and-”

George thought as Dream rambled on. He thought about everything, the lying, the fear, the hurt, the pain, the joy, the exuberance, the *happiness*, the love.

As George sat there, a tall, pretty, boy rambling on about how he should be kicked to the curb over being an idiot, he realized that he was the happiest he had ever been in his lifetime. It was the same Clay who had brought him out of his shell and helped reignite his love for his passion during such a dark point in his life, who was standing before him, broad shoulders, concerned eyes, and *so* much love surrounding him.

"-and honestly, I should just leave right now, I'm just *so* sorry and I-

George moved his hand to rest against Clay’s neck.

“You’re such an idiot,”

“Wha-”

Before either could really process what was happening, warmth, *intense* warmth covered their bodies, sending hot flames down each of their limbs and spreading from where they had met. Clay had instantly moved his free hand to grip the shorter’s waist, his other hand that was already resting on the boy’s cheek gently cupping his face with meaning, thumb idly moving in sync with their lips. George let the euphoria crash over him as his eyes closed, the *heat* enveloping him as after months of pining, tears, and searching, he’d finally landed in the arms of someone who deeply, and truly cared about him.

Neither wanted to pull away, slowly moving away from each other, yet remaining centimeters from their lips as George mumbled against Clay’s mouth.

“Do you- Do you wanna go out some time?”

A smirk pulled at the bashful blonde, before he pulled the brunet in again, this time with more intensity than he had before, letting himself be freer with his grip and mouth movements. George sunk into the kiss, hands pressing harder against the taller’s neck with no hesitation as he let the blonde have at his lips.

George let it go on for a few more seconds (truly not wanting to let him go), before tapping Clay’s chest and pulling away.

“Taking that as a yes,” He laughed, the hands anchoring on his waist feeling nothing short of perfection.

“I’d be stupid to not take this opportunity while I still have it.”

“Thought you were already stupid for your masterplan to date me, mister catfish-”

“- *I didn’t catfish you!* ”

Loud laughter spilled from the brunet’s chest as red pooled on the taller’s cheeks. After a few seconds, George had calmed down and took a minute to delve into Clay’s eyes. Infatuation in its purest form lay there for all to see, in plain sight against each curve of his face and harnessed in his eyes.

“Can I keep calling you sweetheart?”

George looked to the blonde’s hair, and then to his eyes. He supposed it would make sense for someone who was literally made of gold to help his own burn through.

“I reckon you can, Clay.”

As the snow fell around the pair, raging cold burning their faces every second they stood in the open air, George had let himself breathe.

Clay had wanted him to shine, and George wanted to do so together. That was something neither of the pair would forget any time soon.

Chapter End Notes

next chapter is an epilogue :)

[twitter](#)

epilogue

Chapter Summary

He wouldn't trade it for the world.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Hard for *you* ? Can you imagine how hard it was for *me* ?”

George laughed, idly taking a swig of the opened coke in his hand as he listened to his roommate continue talking. A rumble of laughs was felt rather than heard against his back from the tall boy he was laying on against the end of the small couch.

“I had to comfort you hurting and then immediately turn to his dumbass who was constantly in a state of panic!” Sapnap continued, as an arm adjusted around the brunet busy on his phone. Clay started sputtering out excuses as George let himself snort again at the boys’ antics.

“ *Listen* , I was in the process of fucking literally everything up, I think I deserve some grace here-”

“-No you know who deserves the most grace? Me,” George interjected, tilting his head back to look the blonde in the eye and poke at his freckled cheek. “Not only did I have two boys I didn’t know were the same person, but I also had to pretend like Sapnap and Karl were definitely not in the middle of a thing every single day.”

It was Sapnap’s turn to blush as his cheeks heated up and his eyes rolled at the comment.

Shortly after the fateful night after the winter performance, Clay had become a staple at the duo’s dorm, always lingering somewhere around whether or not anyone else was there, and had practically started living in his boyfriend’s room. It only took a few days for Sapnap to start inviting one of his “close friends” over to watch shows or hang out with, and after about a week of knowing glances and side-eyes, it was Clay who had finally broken the ice and outright asked him about Karl.

He too started making an appearance very often in the tiny dorm, and they’d become a nice group. Sapnap had started the process of going to Karl’s more and more, though, the prospect of having more space rather than sharing the tiny bit they had was more than enough to get him up and out.

“We weren’t *that* obvious-”

“-You literally knew where my dorm was, how the *fuck* else would you know that?”

Clay snorted, hand moving to play at the hem of George’s hoodie as he spoke.

“Damn, at least I got Sapnap in on it so I had a good *excuse* as to why I knew where George was. C’mon, Karl, you didn’t even try.”

Another roll of his eyes prompted the brunet to turn in the taller’s arms, pressing his cheek against Sapnap’s chest with his arms crossed. Clay took the moment to smile down at the boy in his arms,

and George felt like he was flying.

It was something he'd gotten used to the longer he was with the blonde. The feeling of soaring over towers with no fear of falling, tender adoration soaking him with each breath, it all became such a norm to him. Not to say he didn't obsess over each time he had experienced it, no, quite the opposite, truly.

A stir in George's stomach took him out of his trance, spurring on a groan as he turned his face into his boyfriend's chest, strong arms securing around the new position of his waist as he did so. With a light laugh in his voice, Clay spoke.

"Yeah? What's wrong, princess?"

He was met with a light hit to his chest as George tried his best to fight back the growing smile and laugh high in him.

"M' starving, can we *please* order something?"

"We've ordered food the past, like, two days, George."

Another groan came from him, with zero malice attached, as he pulled himself up the blonde's body, arms looping around his neck to help.

"I don't see the issue, Dream."

The blonde continued to stare into him, and George took the opportunity to analyze the small waves framing his face. The face of the beautiful boy he'd fallen in love with what seemed like months ago, tanned skin with pink and red hues that only showed just for him, and freckles that were stars across the deep galaxy of his cheeks. He hadn't noticed he'd zoned out until he felt a feather-light kiss to his jaw.

"Sweetheart?"

He almost melted into a puddle right then and there as he raised a hand to brush blonde waves out of Clay's face taking another deep look into his eyes until Sapnap let out a loud retching noise.

"Get a *room!* One of you order pizza for all of us before you start sucking face in front of us."

A loud laugh came from Dream as his grip on the brunet's hips tightened, and George shifted to flip the pair on the opposite end of the couch.

"Let 'em have a moment, I feel like they deserve it," Karl said, yawning, face digging further into his boyfriend's neck.

George let his hands run down Clay's neck, landing in a tight grip with the tall boy's hoodie. He'd idly noted the navy fabric against his own skin as the same one he'd been given by a mystery boy what seemed like ages ago. It gave him a sense of comfort and pride, knowing that he would forever have a piece of Clay with him, despite where he may be physically.

George smiled. Despite the room being filled with soft murmurs and the sound of the world, it would always just be him and Clay. That was something he'd never be able to forget.

“Are you done? You’re gonna die before classes even start again,” Clay said, feet clacking beneath him as he walked over to where George was doing cool-down stretches over the ballet barre. The brunet hummed in response, body aching with effort as he leaned over his right leg where it was propped up. No sounds were heard as George let his eyes close, before shifting his upper body into an arch away, only to be met with bright yellow eyes right in his face. He giggled, lightly tapping the blonde’s flushed cheek before readjusting and coming down from the barre.

“Yeah, yeah, says *you* , mister never-stops-drilling-timesteps.”

Big arms wrapped around his middle as he felt Clay bury himself into his shoulder.

“You and I both know that’s different.”

George turned his head out the floor-to-ceiling window, eyes darting across the city lights below. Clay shifted, turning the boy around in his arms to face him.

“Well, hello to you too,” George laughed, hands moving to rest on the blonde’s chest, fingers dancing over the black fabric of his shirt. A smirk fell across his face as his eyes narrowed, tilting his head so the pair was inches apart.

“You’re really pretty,” Clay mumbled against the smaller’s lips, teetering over and causing an arch in the ballet dancer’s back. The stretch was liberating to George as he hummed a laugh against the blonde, bright lights of the studio being unable to blind the brunet when a boy made of gold was hovering just above him.

Languidly, they fell together, lips molding into each other with a soft sense of infatuation and care. The lights below them had been something George had dreamed of since he was small, the dreams of living in a big city and performing until he physically couldn’t, being right there in front of him after years and years of yearning.

Only this time, he was sharing the melodies and stars with another boy clad in gold whose only desire was to spread his shine to those he loved.

Overwhelmed by love, George had found his place amongst pristine ballet shoes and a worn-out set of taps. He wouldn’t trade it for the world.

Chapter End Notes

as a dancer, writing this piece has been such a joy, and is definitely one of my favorite things i've worked on. the support and love on it all has been just insane, and i cannot thank you enough for the support, truly. that being said, a new multi-chap will be taking this one's place in my updating schedule, and let me just say i am BEYOND excited for it (your hint is two word: fake dating ;)).

i hope you enjoyed reading as much as i did writing! means more than you'll ever know. thank you so, so much for everything, and i hope you end up checking out my other stuff if you liked this! <3

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Works inspired by this ~~one~~ [on only seventeen \(i don't know anything\)](#) by [reydays](#)

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